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Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of amendments to strengthen protections for Massachusetts providers. I am a maternal fetal medicine physician in Boston and am testifying on behalf of the Society for Maternal Fetal Medicine, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the Massachusetts Medical Society.

A maternal fetal medicine specialist is an obstetrician with advanced training to care for mothers and fetuses with medical problems and complications. I have a comprehensive obstetric practice that includes preconception and pregnancy consultation, prenatal care, ultrasounds, labor and delivery services, and abortion care.

As a specialist in complicated pregnancies, I have the privilege and responsibility of caring for families making some of the most difficult health care decisions imaginable. When I diagnose a serious pregnancy complication, my job is to keep my patient safe, provide evidence-based counseling about the range of options that exist, and ultimately to support the unique and individual decision that is right for my patient, including at times abortion.

I choose to practice medicine here in Massachusetts in large part because here I can safely and legally present the full range of options to my patients. Unfortunately, many of my colleagues around the country are no longer able to guarantee patients the same care. I know of several physicians who have left states with abortion bans, many with additional restrictions on counseling, so that they would not be forced to choose between doing what is right and doing what is now legal in their state. Knowing that their community continues to need reproductive health services, a few brave providers have been unfairly targeted by politicians for continuing to provide care within the bounds of the law while speaking out about these policies. However, most have chosen to stay and quietly change their practice. Lack of provider protections in these states has a chilling effect on access to the standard of medical care defined by our professional societies.

As the home to several internationally renowned institutions, Massachusetts is also a health care destination for people with complex pregnancy diagnoses. Most states do not impose restrictions on individuals seeking care, including abortion or gender affirming care, outside of their home state. Even if it were realistic for providers to know each individual state’s policies, we cannot and should not be in the position of deciding whether the state of legal residence has been sufficiently investigated before we take care of a patient. The possibility that we could inadvertently face prosecution for providing care that is good practice and legal in the Commonwealth is chilling and may result in the loss of access to such care for even Massachusetts residents.

Massachusetts could choose to ensure that providers here will not face political impediments to the provision of care that is lawful and consistent with the standards for good medical care. We urge the Board of Registration in Medicine to codify these protections for Massachusetts physicians.



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