



Joint Committee on the Judiciary
June 17, 2019
Testimony of Attorney General Maura Healey
(As prepared for delivery)

Good afternoon, Chairman Eldridge, Chairwoman Cronin, and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

I'm here to express my support for the ROE Act.

Thank you to the sponsors, Senator Chandler and Representatives Haddad and Livingstone, for their leadership on this important legislation.

Across this country, we see an alarming trend as one state legislature after another has passed laws to criminalize abortion and limit access to reproductive health care.

These laws – passed in Alabama, Georgia, Ohio and elsewhere – are an unconstitutional attack on the fundamental rights of women. They are about prohibiting women from making personal decisions about their own bodies, their own families, and their own lives.

Roe v. Wade is at its greatest risk since that decision was handed down more than 45 years ago.

My office has challenged every attempt to roll back the rights of women to access the reproductive health care they need. And we are going to keep fighting to make sure that *Roe* remains the law of the land.

Now is the time for Massachusetts to lead.

We have an opportunity to send a strong message that we are NOT Alabama or Georgia and that we will do everything we can to ensure that abortion is safe, legal and accessible to all women in Massachusetts.

But even here in our own state, we have laws on the books that create unnecessary and sometimes insurmountable barriers to women seeking abortion care.

We have more restrictive laws than many of the states that surround us – Connecticut, Vermont, Maine, New Hampshire and New York. We can do better.

The ROE Act will codify reproductive freedom into state law and improve access by removing unnecessary and burdensome provisions that often function to delay or deny care.

This bill will ensure that medical decisions remain between a patient and her doctor. No Massachusetts woman, faced with the devastating situation of needing to end a pregnancy because of a serious medical complication, should be forced to travel across the country to access health care.

This bill will also protect the health, safety, and privacy of young women by ensuring that our laws no longer create barriers that delay or deny access to health care – or force them to cross state lines.

Now more than ever, Massachusetts must build on the promise of *Roe v. Wade* with laws that reflect the best and most current science and respect

the right of every woman to make private medical decisions in consultation with her doctor.

I hope that you will join me in supporting the ROE Act and report it favorably from the Committee.

Thank you.