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July 10, 2024

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of our 3 million members—78 percent of whom are women—we urge you to VOTE YES on the Reproductive Freedom for Women Act (S. 4554) to protect access to abortion rights and other reproductive health care, and restore protections established by the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Roe v. Wade*. Votes on this issue may be included in NEA’s report card for the 118th Congress.

NEA believes that family planning includes the right to reproductive freedom. In the two years since the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, more than 20 states have denied women that right as well as access to the full range of reproductive health care. Even access to in vitro fertilization is threatened.

Support for reproductive rights

NEA develops policies at its Representative Assembly, the largest democratic gathering in the country. Each year, some 7,000 delegates (members elected by their peers) debate and vote on establishing positions. Since 1978, we have supported the right of our members to choose whether to have children and how to have a family. Our official resolution says, “The National Education Association believes in family planning, including the right to reproductive freedom.”

Over the years, NEA has participated in litigation on behalf of members based on *Roe v. Wade*, including the cases of:

- Jeanne Eckmann, a teacher who studied to be a nun, became pregnant as a result of rape, and was fired by her school district for choosing to have a child out of wedlock. (NEA relied on *Roe* to argue that it violated her right to reproductive freedom for the school to fire her for exercising her right not to have an abortion.)
- Linda Littlejohn, a Kentucky member fired for getting a divorce. (The Sixth Circuit agreed with NEA that her firing violated the right established in *Roe* to privacy in matters relating to procreation and marriage.)
- Janice Dike, a Florida member denied the right to breastfeed her baby during her duty-free lunch period. (The Fifth Circuit agreed with NEA in relying on *Roe*’s recognition of a

fundamental right to decide how to nurture and raise children, referring to breastfeeding as the “most elemental form of parental care.”)

NEA has also supported reproductive freedom in amicus filings in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, *Whole Women’s Health v. Hellerstedt*, and *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*.

Leave decisions to individuals

Family planning and reproductive health decisions should be left to individuals. Having a child is one of the most important and personal decisions anyone makes—a decision with lifelong consequences for education, health care, employment, and earnings that affect entire families.

As a result of the Supreme Court’s decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*, women are losing the right to make that decision based on their own conscience and family considerations, in consultation with a physician or other health care provider. In particular, poor women, women of color, and women in rural areas suffer due to lack of access to reproductive and other health care, including family planning services. The consequences of an unplanned pregnancy or reproductive health care crisis can be dire—not just for the pregnant woman, but her entire family.

For all these reasons, we urge you to VOTE YES on the Reproductive Freedom for Women Act (S. 4554).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca S. Pringle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'R'.

Rebecca S. Pringle
President
National Education Association