

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 21, 2022

Chair Lionell Spruill
Privileges and Elections Committee
Senate of Virginia
900 E. Main St.
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Ranking Member Mark Sickles
Privileges and Elections Committee
Virginia House of Delegates
900 E. Main St.
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Chair Spruill and Ranking Member Sickles,

Thank you for your continued leadership and service to the Commonwealth of Virginia. We write today to urge you to take prompt action to protect abortion access for all Virginians.

The Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health* reversed decades of precedent guaranteeing women the right to make personal health care decisions.¹ We are alarmed by the number of states that have implemented total or near-total abortion bans, restricting access to reproductive freedom for millions of women. We are also concerned that Governor Youngkin has indicated that he plans to take Virginia in a similar direction. Shortly after *Dobbs* was decided, he directed Republican members of the General Assembly to craft legislation to significantly limit abortion access in Virginia.

Attacks on reproductive freedom disproportionately impact vulnerable populations, including low-income women, women of color, young Americans, and individuals living in rural communities.² Abortion restrictions are also out of step with the Virginia majority. Sixty-seven percent of Virginians believe that abortion should be legal in all or most cases, and in the 2022 election, voters across the country vastly rejected extremist restrictions on abortion.³ In August, Kansas voters rejected a ballot measure that would have eliminated the right to abortion in their state constitution.⁴ Then, in November, voters in Kentucky and Montana rejected anti-abortion referendums in their own states, and voters in Michigan, Vermont, and California passed referendums codifying the right to abortion in their state constitutions.⁵

When the Supreme Court abandoned constitutional protection of reproductive rights, it indicated that it was the responsibility of "the people and their elected representatives" to act.⁶ Given the unprecedented assault on reproductive rights, it is imperative that the right to abortion be enshrined in the Virginia Constitution and codified in Congress. We urge you to advance legislation that would allow these rights to be codified into the Virginia Constitution, and we will continue to work to codify reproductive freedom at the federal level.

¹ *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, 597 U.S. __ (2022).

² Artiga, S., Hill, L., Ranji, U., & Gomez, I. (2022, July 15). *What are the Implications of the Overturning of Roe v. Wade for Racial Disparities?* Retrieved November 18, 2022 from <https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/issue-brief/what-are-the-implications-of-the-overturning-of-roe-v-wade-for-racial-disparities>.

³ Christopher Newport University. (2022, October 20). *Mid-term mixed bag: Virginians split not only on policy, but even on what issues matter as November approaches*. Retrieved November 18, 2022, from <https://cnu.edu/wasoncenter/surveys/archive/2022-10-12.html>.

⁴ Lysen, D., Ziegler, L., & Mesa, B. (2022, August 3). *Voters in Kansas decide to keep abortion legal in the state, rejecting an amendment*. NPR. Retrieved November 16, 2022, from <https://www.npr.org/sections/2022-live-primary-election-race-results/2022/08/02/1115317596/kansas-voters-abortion-legal-reject-constitutional-amendment>.

⁵ Cohen, R. M. (2022, November 11). *How abortion rights advocates won every ballot measure this year*. Retrieved November 16, 2022, from <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/23451074/abortion-ballot-measure-midterms-kentucky-montana-michigan>.

⁶ *Dobbs* at 69.

We appreciate your ongoing work in the General Assembly to protect reproductive rights in Virginia, and we look forward to working with you to protect the reproductive rights of all Virginians.

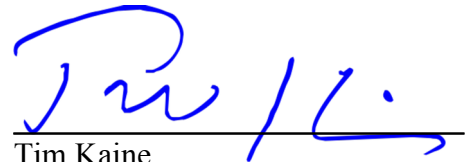
Sincerely,



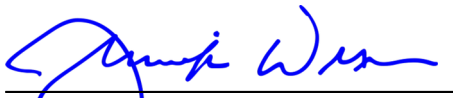
A. Donald McEachin
Member of Congress



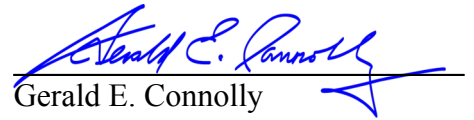
Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



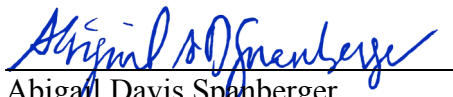
Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Jennifer Wexton
Member of Congress



Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



Abigail Davis Spangenberg
Member of Congress



Elaine G. Luria
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress