

Sample Testimony

Good Evening Council Members. My name is _____ and I am a resident of district _____, I have lived in this town for _____ years, and I am here to oppose the effort to ban abortion in this city.

The ordinance before you today seeks to ban abortion within city limits, makes taking and administering emergency contraceptive illegal, and makes organizations who support women's health criminal organizations. This ordinance is out of step with the vast majority of Texans and a significant portion of the [people of this city] who think abortion should be safe and legal.

[Example of a personal story] This is a deeply personal issue for me, for lots of reasons. I am a woman who is choosing to remain childless, I am a daughter of a woman who has had four children and became unexpectedly pregnant with me 11 years after her last child was born and chose to keep me, and I am the granddaughter of a woman who had an illegal abortion. Each of us, me, my mother, and my grandmother have travelled very different paths, but we have one thing in common: we have all chosen our destinies for ourselves. And I want to live in a world where my 14-year-old niece has the same freedom I have had to plan my family and control my destiny.

That connection between the freedom to plan our families and the ability to take control of our destiny is not an abstract concept. It is very simple, women who live in places with policies that support women's access to the full range of reproductive health care have higher earnings, are more integrated into the workforce, and are less likely to experience an extended employment gap than women in areas that do not support abortion access.ⁱ Women who don't have access to abortion are also more likely to remain in poverty, and as a result on Medicaid, and are more likely to stay in abusive relationships.ⁱⁱ

Also, banning abortion does not make it magically go away. Before *Roe v. Wade*, the number of illegal abortions was estimated to be up to 1.2 million per year.ⁱⁱⁱ For perspective, there are about 600,000 abortions performed per year now, which means abortions have been cut in half since *Roe v. Wade*.

This ordinance is just too extreme for our city and I urge you today to choose to support women and vote no.

ⁱ Kate Bahn et al. , *Linking Reproductive Health Care Access to Labor Market Opportunities for Women*, CTR. FOR AM. PROGRESS (2017), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2017/11/21/442653/linking-reproductive-health-care-access-labor-market-opportunities-women/> (finding that “women living in states with a better reproductive health care climate—including insurance coverage of contraceptive drugs and services; expanded Medicaid eligibility for family-planning services;

insurance coverage of infertility treatments; and the availability of state-supported public funding for medically necessary abortions—have higher earnings and face less occupational segregation compared with women living in states that have more limited reproductive health care access”).

ⁱⁱ Foster DG et al, Socioeconomic outcomes of women who receive and women who are denied wanted abortions in the United States, *AJPH*, 2018, 108(3):407-413, doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2017.304247; Sarah C.M. Roberts et al., *Risk of Violence from the Man Involved in Pregnancy After Receiving or Being Denied an Abortion*, 12 *BMC MED.* 1 (2014), available at <https://bmcmmedicine.biomedcentral.com/track/pdf/10.1186/s12916-014-0144-z>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Rachel Benson Gold, *Lessons from Before Roe: Will Past Be Prologue?*, GUTTMACHER INST. (March 2003), <https://www.guttmacher.org/gpr/2003/03/lessons-roe-will-past-be-prologue>.