

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION *foundation*

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November 17, 2020

The Honorable Michael J. Rodrigues
Chairperson
Massachusetts Senate Committee on Ways and Means
24 Beacon St., Room 280
Boston, MA 02133

Re: Please pass Amendment 759 in the annual budget bill

Dear Chairperson Rodrigues and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Freedom From Religion Foundation, a national nonprofit dedicated to upholding the separation between church and state. FFRF represents more than 33,000 nonreligious members with over 640 current members in Massachusetts.

I am writing to you asking you to approve Amendment 759 in the annual budget bill of Massachusetts.

Amendment 759 would remove medically unnecessary barriers to abortion care and improve access to reproductive health care throughout Massachusetts. Additionally, the amendment would allow 16- and 17-year-olds to make their own reproductive health decisions without court intervention. Furthermore, Amendment 759 provides care for later pregnancies in cases of lethal fetal diagnosis. FFRF commends the 108 members of the Massachusetts House of Representatives for their support of this important piece of legislation.¹

Amendment 759 reflects findings by numerous studies that demonstrate the safety and effectiveness of adequate access to reproductive health care:

To begin with, abortion is an extremely safe and effective medical procedure. A 2018 study by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) found that serious complications are rare.² For example, in 2017, medication abortions accounted for 39 percent of all abortions in the United States³ with a success rate of 95–98 percent.^{4 5} In fact, risk of major complications related to medication abortions is minimal — less than 1 percent.⁶ In terms of safety, countless studies have shown women are about 14 times more likely to die during or after giving birth than from complications of an abortion.⁷ In fact, the same study by NASEM that

found abortions to be safe and effective also concluded that state regulations create barriers to optimal care.⁸

As a secular nation, our laws related to health care, including reproductive health care, should reflect *science*. Amendment 759 is an important step toward providing medically accurate and science-based reproductive health care for the women of Massachusetts.

We urge you to pass Amendment 759 in the annual budget bill and codify comprehensive reproductive care for the citizens of Massachusetts.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this perspective with you.

Very truly,



Annie Laurie Gaylor
Co-President

1. *ROE Act Coalition Statement on the Adoption of Amendment #759*. (2020, November 13). ACLU Massachusetts. <https://www.aclum.org/en/news/roe-act-coalition-statement-adoption-amendment-759>.
2. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2018. *The Safety and Quality of Abortion Care in the United States*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/24950>.
3. Medication Abortion. (2019, November 21). Retrieved from <https://www.guttmacher.org/evidence-you-can-use/medication-abortion>.
4. Chen MJ and Creinin MD, Mifepristone with buccal misoprostol for medical abortion: a systematic review, *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, 2015, 126(1):12–121, <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0v4749ss>.
5. Is Medication Abortion a Safe Option to End an Unintended Pregnancy. (2017, May 22). Retrieved from <https://nwhn.org/medication-abortion-safe-option-end-unintended-pregnancy/>.
6. Rigterink, E., Saftlas, A., & Atrash, H. (2012, December 07). Induced Abortion. Retrieved from 6. 6/ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B9780123849786000169>.
7. Guttmacher Institute, 2017.
8. Government-Mandated Delays Before Abortion. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.aclu.org/other/government-mandated-delays-abortion>.