



September 15, 2021

Mayor Ted Wheeler, Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty, Commissioner Carmen Rubio, Commissioner Dan Ryan and Commissioner Mingus Mapps.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning. My name is Jeanine Morales; I am the Deputy Director of NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon. I am extremely honored to stand in front of my city leaders who want to show our nation what it means to lead with compassion, and how to ensure everyone in our community can feel safe, well informed and supported when it comes to accessing abortion. Oregon has been progressive in policy, leading the nation with advances in health equity including the Reproductive Health Equity Act (RHEA) passed in 2017 that expanded access to highly impacted communities. Like many, I am outraged by the abuse of power demonstrated by Texas politicians. And I am so proud to see our leaders in Portland choose to lead with actions that will have a real impact, centered on the people directly harmed by these recent events.

Texas Senate Bill 8 will have the most harmful impacts on Black, brown, LGBTQ+, young people, people who live in rural communities, immigrant communities and low-wage individuals — people whose voices are often silenced or ignored by their elected officials. Today, Portland leaders have the opportunity to set a new high bar for the rest of our nation. Thank you for demonstrating how local leaders can be champions for their residents and communities. Thank you for seeing, listening to and for creating space for people who have had or who will have abortions. And thank you for centering their needs in your policy decisions.

Shortly after the passing of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Pro-Choice Oregon began reaching out to our local reproductive partners from the Northwest Abortion Action Fund (NWAAF), Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon (PPAO), Forward Together national partners from the National Institute for Reproductive Health (NIRH) and *All Above All to discuss how we can help build resilient communities prepared for the very real possibility of Roe being turned over. We knew then that Oregon leaders would be ready to hold the torch and create a sanctuary for people who may have to travel to our state to receive essential health care. This is especially important as Eastern Oregon has many residents who access abortion care in Idaho. Anti-abortion politicians in Idaho have already passed a “trigger ban” to criminalize abortion when Roe falls and have already shown an interest in passing a ban like Texas Senate Bill 8.

And unfortunately, Senate Bill 8 is just the beginning. We expect an onslaught of attempts to remove autonomy from anyone seeking an abortion at all levels of government. Leaders who are willing to put a bounty on a person just because they may not be ready to start a family. We are also still in a pandemic, and many people from impacted communities are dealing with economic hardships from unemployment, houselessness, lack of insurance, loss of family or support systems due to COVID and other barriers that can make forcing an unwanted pregnancy can have detrimental mental health effects. This is why we are looking to you to model being leaders who are ready to take ownership and lead the resistance.



We have an opportunity to put Portland leaders on the national map. And as partners, Pro-Choice Oregon is ready to help other cities, counties and state legislators follow your powerful example. This is exactly how we should be showing up: By providing municipal funds to the Northwest Abortion Access Fund, we can not only help our residents who need support and care but to those who come to our state with nowhere else to go, helping them remain safe while supporting clinics in our local economy. We have amazing providers who will give compassionate care, and you will help us meet the unmet resources for residents who still cannot access the care they need.

In conclusion, thank you for making this moment possible, the world is looking at Portland, I want to empower you to continue to lead by putting people first, by voting yes on today's resolution to provide support to abortion funds.

Thank you for your support for Resolution 680-1.

Sincerely,

Jeanine Morales
Deputy Director, NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon