

My name is Debby Churchman and I am a member of the League of Women Voters of Virginia. I am speaking to you today in support of HJ 519 regarding the fundamental right to reproductive freedom. The League believes that everyone should have access to affordable, quality health care, including birth control, and the privacy to make reproductive choices. Such choices should be made by the person considering whether or not to have a child, with guidance from their provider and trusted loved ones.

Denying abortion access puts another financial burden largely on the backs of low-income pregnant individuals. According to the Guttmacher Institute, “75% of abortion patients” are “poor or low income.” If you make abortion illegal, it will not end abortion—it will end safe, legal abortion. People with privilege will continue to access safe abortions by traveling or moving to states that protect reproductive health care. Those who are very young, who are People of Color, who are economically vulnerable, who are transgender – they will be hardest hit and most at risk.

A Public Policy Polling survey published in January 2020 found that 79% of Virginians believe that abortion should be legal, and that the government should not prevent an individual from making that decision for themselves. We urge you to keep abortion safe and legal by voting yes on this proposed amendment.