Legislation Details (With Text)

File #:	RES. 2022-R045	**Version:**	1	**Name:**	
Type:	Resolution			**Status:**	Adopted
File created:	7/5/2022			**In control:**	City Council
On agenda:				**Final action:**	7/5/2022
Title:	To express the City's opposition to the U. S. Supreme Court's Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Org. decision, and to ask the General Assembly of Virginia to protect and expand abortion access.				
Sponsors:	Mayor Stoney, Katherine Jordan, Cynthia Newbille, Michael Jones, Stephanie Lynch, Vice President Robertson, Ann-Frances Lambert, Andreas Addison				
Indexes:					
Code sections:					
Attachments:	1. Res. No. 2022-R045 - Expedited 20220705				

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
7/5/2022	1	City Council		

To express the City's opposition to the U. S. Supreme Court's *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Org.* decision, and to ask the General Assembly of Virginia to protect and expand abortion access.

WHEREAS, in the case of *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Org.*, 2022 U.S. LEXIS 3057 (2022), the Supreme Court of the United States of America reversed 50 years of precedent upholding a constitutional right to abortion; and

WHEREAS, abortion care is an essential reproductive health service and its availability is an important part of every American's right to safe and accessible health care; and

WHEREAS, there is no decision more important than whether and when to have children, especially since patients who give birth to a child after being denied an abortion are 100 times more likely to die during childbirth than patients who actively wanted to carry a child to term; and

WHEREAS, abortion is a safe and common health service, and nearly one in four people who become pregnant in the United States of America will have an abortion by age 45; and

WHEREAS, history has shown that it is not possible to ban abortion; instead, it is only possible to ban safe abortions; and

WHEREAS, evidence shows that limiting legal access to safe abortion drives increased domestic violence; and

WHEREAS, laws criminalizing abortion can have profoundly negative impacts on those who have miscarriages; and

WHEREAS, the negative impacts of limited legal access to safe abortion disproportionately affect our most vulnerable, especially Black and Brown communities, those living in poverty, and survivors of child abuse, sexual assault, and domestic violence; and

WHEREAS, the maternal mortality rate in the United States of America is the highest among developed nations, with a staggering 23.8 deaths per 100,000 childbirths, with a disproportionate impact on Black patients; and

WHEREAS, restricting access to abortion will significantly increase the maternal mortality rate in that patients who give birth after being denied an abortion are 100 times more likely to die during childbirth than patients who actively wanted to carry a child to term; and

WHEREAS, *Roe v. Wade*, 410 U.S. 113 (1973), and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, 505 U.S. 833 (1992), were foundational decisions protecting a constitutional right to privacy; and

WHEREAS, the *Dobbs* decision overrules these precedents and effectively jeopardizes many other essential rights and freedoms; and

WHEREAS, regardless of the Supreme Court majority's opinion that abortion is not protected by the United States Constitution, the Council of the City of Richmond is of the opinion that abortion care is health care and a fundamental human right; and

WHEREAS, the majority of Americans support legal abortion care, and 88 percent of Virginians believe that abortion should remain legal under some or all circumstances; and

WHEREAS, despite the *Dobbs* decision, abortion care remains protected by the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia; and

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WHEREAS, legal abortion in Virginia has been and will continue to be under attack in the General Assembly of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the City of Richmond has a vested interest in protecting and promoting the health and rights of its residents, including the right to privacy and the right to access legal, safe abortion care; and

WHEREAS, there are 15 clinics providing abortion care in Virginia, three of which are located within the city of Richmond; and

WHEREAS, the three clinics in the city anticipate a significant increase in demand for abortion from residents of surrounding states where abortion is now or will soon be illegal due to the *Dobbs* decision; and

WHEREAS, the Council believes that it is important that the Council express the City's opposition to the *Dobbs* decision and that the City ask the General Assembly of Virginia to protect and expand abortion access;

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND:

That:

1. The City vehemently opposes restrictions on abortion access, and we stand in solidarity with those in states where abortion is now or will soon be illegal;

2. The City commits to advocate for state and federal laws that protect the right of any and all who seek safe, legal abortion care within the city of Richmond; and

3. The City will take such actions as may be permitted by law to protect the rights of people seeking safe, legal abortion care in the city of Richmond.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the City of Richmond respectfully asks that the General Assembly of Virginia protect and expand abortion access by:

1. Protecting recent gains in access, thanks to Chapter 899 of the 2020 Acts of Assembly of

Virginia, known as the "Reproductive Health Protection Act of 2020," and ensuring no new restrictions or bans;

2. Introducing and passing a constitutional amendment to define abortion as a right protected by the Constitution of Virginia, thereby protecting access to safe, legal abortion for years to come;

3. Passing House Bill No. 1922 as introduced in the 2021 session of the General Assembly of Virginia, known as the "Reproductive Health Equity Act," and expanding access to abortion funding; and

4. Repealing state restrictions and removing abortion from the criminal laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

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