January 21, 2022

Dear Senators,

The undersigned organizations representing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people write to urge the Senate to bring to the floor and pass **S. 1975**, the **Women's Health Protection Act** (WHPA). Our organizations, representing millions of LGBTQ people across this country, support access to the full range of reproductive health care, including abortion, which is vital to the health, safety and lives of our diverse communities. We know that the harm from the continued erosion of reproductive rights falls hardest on those who experience health disparities due to social, political, and environmental inequities, including LGBTQ people, people with low incomes, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, immigrants, young people, people with disabilities, and those living in rural and other medically underserved areas.

Being able to decide whether and when to have a child is essential to the dignity and equality of all people. In 1973 in *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court recognized as a constitutional right what must be true in any free society: it is up to the individual, not to the government or any third party, to make intensely personal decisions about childbearing and abortion. This precedent has stood for nearly 50 years, but we now face the real possibility that the current Court will undermine or overturn it. With half of the states poised to ban abortion within their borders if the Court goes this route, the stakes could not be higher.

Even before this catastrophic threat, access to abortion has been curtailed in ways that severely exacerbate economic and social inequality. Those with Medicaid and other government-sponsored health insurance had their ability to obtain affordable abortion care stripped away not long after *Roe* was decided. And draconian state regulations that serve no legitimate medical purpose, combined with violence and harassment by anti-abortion forces, have reduced the number of abortion providers across the country so that even those with means often have difficulty finding a place to obtain the care they need.

There are many reasons that our organizations, representing millions of LGBTQ people across this country, support passage of the Women's Health Protection Act. First, many queer-identified and transgender people can and do become pregnant, and some will need abortion care if they face an unwanted pregnancy. The Women's Health Protection Act will ensure that unwarranted restrictions do not stand in the way of that care. Second, many abortion and family planning clinics have expanded their services and become trusted providers of reproductive and other medical care to LGBTQ people, offering affirming, judgment-free care to members of this community, many of whom would otherwise go without due to discrimination and mistreatment in the larger health care arena. Third, the movements for reproductive freedom and LGBTQ equality share the fundamental goal of control over our own bodies – the freedom to decide whether to become or remain pregnant, whether and with whom to have intimate relationships, and whether to seek medical care to help our bodies align with our gender identities. The Women's Health Protection Act will ensure that health care providers are able to continue helping their patients receive the medically necessary care that they need to further their health, dignity and well-being. Fourth, abortion restrictions are a form of sex discrimination, a persistent scourge that harms all women, including LBTQ women, as well as non-binary people and GBTQ men.

Finally, our community has a deep interest in exposing the false "health and safety" premise upon which these politically motivated abortion restrictions are based. Today, we are witnessing cruel attempts by state legislators to bar medical professionals from providing care to transgender youth, despite the overwhelming consensus of the medical profession that such care is medically necessary. The policymakers pushing restriction after restriction on abortion care similarly ignore the evidence of the safety of abortion and the informed opinion of

the medical profession when they enact sham “health and safety” measures that they claim protect patients but in fact do the opposite by reducing access.

We need Congress to act. The Senate must follow the House and pass the Women’s Health Protection Act. WHPA establishes a statutory right for health care providers to provide, and their patients to receive, abortion care without medically unnecessary restrictions, limitations, and bans that single out abortion and impede access to care. The bill would put a stop to harmful restrictions and bans, and it would protect the right to access abortion care for all, no matter where someone happens to live.

This will be a pivotal year in the battle to ensure the right to reproductive autonomy. With the Supreme Court poised to eviscerate that right, it is up to Congress to step in. The House of Representatives has acted, and the Senate must do the same. Pass the Women’s Health Protection Act.

Sincerely,

National Center for Lesbian Rights

Athlete Ally

Equality California

Equality Federation

Equality North Carolina

Family Equality

GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders

GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality

Human Rights Campaign

Lambda Legal

Mazzoni Center

National Black Justice Coalition

National Center for Transgender Equality

National LGBTQ Bar Association

National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund

PFLAG National

Silver State Equality

Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund

Whitman-Walker Institute

Woodhull Freedom Foundation