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Rep. Tina Liebling
477 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

March 28th, 2023

Chair Liebling and Members of the Committee:

Gender Justice is the organizational home of UnRestrict Minnesota, an expansive, diverse, and inclusive coalition for reproductive rights, health, and justice. UnRestrict Minnesota is a multi-racial coalition of more than 30 health care clinics, abortion funds, practical support groups, LGBTQ advocacy groups, faith communities, organizers, lawyers, doulas, and many more.

Our coalition represents the majority of Minnesotans. Across the state, Minnesotans have made their support for abortion rights abundantly clear — including by sending to the legislature our state's first pro-reproductive-freedom majority ever.

We are writing in support of the Health Finance and Policy Omnibus Bill (HF2930). In particular we are grateful for the inclusion of provisions from the Reproductive Freedom Codification Act (HF91), to remove unconstitutional, outdated, unjust, and harmful statutes and the increase in reimbursement rates for abortion and family planning services.

Some of these provisions repeal statutes that were found unconstitutional this past summer. Lifting these restrictions had an immediate positive impact on patients, both Minnesotans, and people from the upper midwest and across the country who have lost meaningful access to reproductive health care in their home states. It was a proud moment for our state — an important step toward bringing our laws into line with the values that the majority of Minnesotans hold. Leaving these unconstitutional laws in statute creates confusion and uncertainty for providers and patients.

A majority of Minnesotans support repealing these and other restrictions on abortion, and expanding access to abortion, and they are very much looking to you to lead. In our recent statewide survey, an overwhelming 89 percent of Minnesota voters said they want to know what their elected officials are doing on the issue of abortion and want you to take decisive action.

Reproductive rights are meaningless without access. Abortion services are reimbursed at extremely low rates. Thus, we are grateful for including an increase to reimbursement rates for abortion and family planning services. However, we urge you to consider a 50%, rather than 10% increase. Many independent clinics see a disproportionate share of Medicaid patients and are only able to make ends meet through grants and fundraising. This is all the more

unsustainable and urgent due to the 40% increase in second trimester abortions due to restrictive laws that are increasing patient load overall in Minnesota, and the threat of nationwide changes to medication abortion due to a pending Texas court case.

When we talk about access to full spectrum reproductive health, that also includes support for pregnant people. We support increased funding for programs that benefit pregnant folks: Healthy Beginnings, Healthy Families; Perinatal Quality Collaborative; MN Partnership to Prevent Infant Mortality; Sustaining and expanding the jail program; and Maternal and Infant health programs. We also support the increase of funding for the Family Planning Special Projects program.

These proposals would help bring our laws back into line with the values and wishes of the vast majority of Minnesotans, restore reproductive rights, and increase reproductive health care access and equity throughout our state. We thank you for their inclusion, along with the myriad investments this bill makes in health, well-being, and equity for all Minnesotans. Thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Megan Peterson".

Megan Peterson
Executive Director, Gender Justice