

**Sarah Gutman, MD MSPH**  
**December 13, 2023**  
**House Judiciary Committee Public Hearing**

Good Morning House Judiciary Committee members and others joining today. I am happy to be here and I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 1888, a proposed Constitutional amendment that would safeguard personal reproductive liberty.

My name is Sarah Gutman, I am a board-certified obstetrician-gynecologist at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia with specialized training in Complex Family Planning. I am here to share with you my clinical expertise and knowledge around the reproductive health care that I provide to people in Pennsylvania. The testimony I am providing today is my own, it is not on behalf of any organization.

As an OB/GYN I provide a wide range of care for my patients. I do cancer screenings and annual exams. I see patients who are planning a pregnancy and those who are hoping to prevent one. I provide prenatal care and deliver babies. I also provide abortion care when my patients need to end a pregnancy. I am here today because I see every day how deeply personal decisions about reproductive health and pregnancy can be, and I know this amendment would help protect my patients' ability to make those decisions for themselves.

When I sit down with patients, it is hard to imagine that the healthcare I am providing is now illegal in many states. My patients are people you know. They are making decisions based on many complex factors, which only they can possibly know and understand. They are often already parents and are thinking about their existing families. Some cannot continue a pregnancy because of their own health. Some have just learned about a devastating fetal diagnosis and need to end a pregnancy they were desperate to create. I have cared for patients with a pregnancy affected by Trisomy 18, a lethal genetic disorder and the same diagnosis received by a woman in Texas where the Supreme Court recently denied her request for abortion care, forcing her to leave the state. Because I live and practice in Pennsylvania, when my patients received the same diagnosis I was able to stay their doctor during one of the hardest times of their lives, to offer them the decision to continue that pregnancy or to end it, and to provide the medical care they wanted and needed. I have had the privilege of caring for patients in a subsequent healthy pregnancy, a pregnancy that may never have happened if they hadn't first been able to safely access abortion care.

Protecting personal reproductive liberty is also a critical element to combat existing social and racial disparities in maternal and reproductive health. In states where abortion bans have been enacted, they have a disproportionate impact on people who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color, the LGBTQ community, and low-income. These are the individuals who have the hardest time leaving their states to get care in neighboring ones, and who may not have the money, transportation, childcare, or time to travel. These are the same individuals who are most likely to suffer from pregnancy

complications if forced to continue a pregnancy and give birth. For example, Pennsylvania's maternal mortality rate is two times higher among Black women than the overall population.

In addition to being an OB/GYN, I am mother. My own two children were born in Pennsylvania, and I am excited to raise them here. But I also want my children to have the same autonomy over their reproductive lives as I have had in mine. This amendment would protect those rights. By supporting HB 1888, you have the opportunity to protect and support all Pennsylvanians' personal reproductive liberty, now and for generations to come.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you this morning. Thank you for your time and for holding this important hearing.