

**City of Mount Rainier**  
***Proclaiming June 24<sup>th</sup> as Reproductive Rights***  
***are Human Rights Day***  
***in the City of Mount Rainier***

**WHEREAS**, on June 24, 2022, the United States Supreme Court in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* overturned a 50-year precedent set by *Roe v. Wade*, *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, and eliminated the Federal constitutional right to abortion in the United States and subsequently more than a dozen States have passed legal barriers that fully ban abortion, and many others have passed legal barriers that severely restrict abortion; and

**WHEREAS**, there has been increased risk of criminalization of people seeking abortion, doctor, nurses, and those involved in providing and dispensing reproductive and gender-affirming care; and

**WHEREAS**, since the overturned of *Roe v. Wade* via the *Dobbs* decision, subsequently the ban has forced thousands affected to travel outside state borders to seek care in states such as Maryland where abortion is legal; and

**WHEREAS**, the access to safe and legal abortion is a Human Right that should be safeguarded and legally protected and no one should be criminalized for any pregnancy outcomes or for providing essential care; and

**WHEREAS**, pregnant people who have been denied abortion care may be putting their health, fertility, and lives at risk, have been forced to carry nonviable pregnancies to term, or have been criminalized for miscarriage, the circumstances of their pregnancies, abortions, and other pregnancy outcomes; and

**WHEREAS**, the retrogression on abortion rights in the United States conflicts with the United States' obligations under international human rights law; and

**WHEREAS**, we have seen in various countries the effects of criminalizing health care - women forced to carry unviable pregnancies to term at the cost of their health and sometimes lives and women serving decades long sentences for suffering miscarriages - such are the international cases of *Beatriz and others v. El Salvador* and countless women currently serving 30 years or more in jail in El Salvador; and

**WHEREAS**, treaties ratified by the United States are binding on individual States and are the "supreme Law of the Land" under clause 2 of Article VI of the Constitution; and

**WHEREAS**, Indigenous people, Black and Brown people, people of color, people with low incomes, people living in rural areas, people with disabilities, immigrants, LGBTQ+ individuals, and other marginalized individuals are disproportionately likely to be surveilled, arrested, charged, prosecuted, convicted, and heavily punished within the American criminal justice system and, due to systemic discrimination, to experience additional scrutiny from the American legal system; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States has been reviewed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) – two treaty monitoring bodies – since the Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization decision and the United Nations Human Rights Committee has explicitly recommended that the United States Government at all levels - federal, state and local – uphold our human rights obligations under these treaties, including protecting sexual and reproductive health and rights; and

**WHEREAS**, abortion is legal in the State of Maryland and has been since 1973, and was reaffirmed again by voters in a referendum in 1992; However, a statute can be repealed legislatively without involving the voters, and Dobbs has shown even if abortion is currently legal, it can remain at risk; and

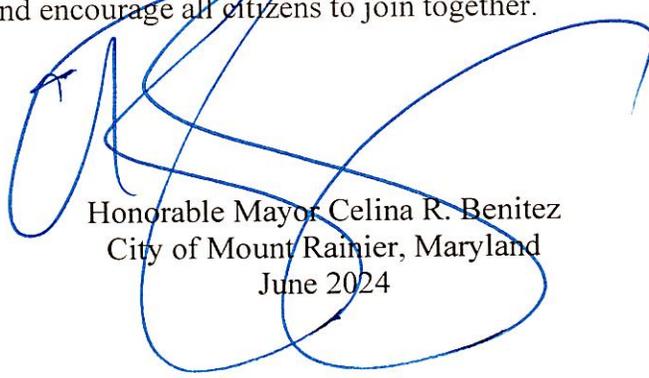
**WHEREAS**, A constitutional amendment offers the highest form of protection for abortion care in Maryland. Repealing an amendment to the constitution is much more difficult than reversing other types of policy protections for reproductive freedom; and

**WHEREAS**, Maryland Governor Wes Moore Signed into law the Reproductive Freedom Bill Package in 2023 that included: an electronic health record data privacy bill; a shielding bill to protect providers and patients of legal reproductive health care, including abortion from attacks by anti-abortion extremists in other states; a bill requiring 4-year residential public colleges to put in place a plan for students to access comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care, including abortion, STI testing/treatment, contraceptives, and emergency contraceptives; and a constitutional amendment to ensure every person in Maryland has the right to prevent, continue, or end their own pregnancy.

**WHEREAS**, the Reproductive Freedom Bill has allowed for a constitutional amendment to be on the ballot in Maryland this November 2024. The decision to prevent pregnancy through contraception, carry a pregnancy to term, or terminate a pregnancy through abortion would only be up to a pregnant person and their health care provider. In the absence of federal legislation, this is the strongest possible protection of the right to reproductive freedom for Maryland residents; and

**WHEREAS**, this proclamation aligns the Mount Rainier City government with its human rights obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in accordance with Article VI, clause 2 of the Constitution.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE RESOLVED**, I, Mayor Celina Benitez, Mayor of the City of Mount Rainier, do hereby proclaim June 24, 2024, as Reproductive Rights are Human Rights Day in the City of Mount Rainier and encourage all citizens to join together.



Honorable Mayor Celina R. Benitez  
City of Mount Rainier, Maryland  
June 2024