



# MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SOCIETY

*Every physician matters, each patient counts.*

October 20, 2020

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The Honorable Robert A. DeLeo  
Speaker, House of Representatives  
State House, Room 356  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Mr. Speaker:

On behalf of the Massachusetts Medical Society, we write to underscore the critical importance of the legislature's opportunity to guarantee equitable access to safe, legal abortion care in Massachusetts. With the passing of Justice Ginsburg, the Medical Society believes the state must act now to protect a person's right to make deeply personal and complex decisions with the support and trusted guidance of their physician, without inequity and absent undue barriers or stigma.

Justice Ginsburg's enduring legacy is one that promoted and protected reproductive freedom, gender equality, and equity and fairness. In that spirit, the late Justice opined how medically unnecessary barriers undermine access to abortion and disproportionately harm vulnerable communities. This is true in Massachusetts today. Under our current law, physicians are forced to refer pregnant patients who have received a fatal fetal diagnosis out of state for care, which is often cost-prohibitive. Access to health care is not equitable when it is limited only to those who can afford it. Moreover, we know the current judicial bypass system for minors seeking abortion disproportionately burdens young people of color and young people with low incomes.

The legislature can ensure that abortion access in the Commonwealth is more equitable by passing the ROE Act. Most notably, provisions authorizing abortion after 24 weeks in instances of lethal fetal anomalies, reforming processes for young people to access abortion, and including abortion in the pregnancy-related safety-net insurance coverage will most effectively promote equitable access to important medical care.

Passage of the ROE Act is an important step toward reducing health disparities for vulnerable populations and it will enhance and protect the physician-patient relationship and support physicians' ability to make clinical decisions for the benefit of patients. We urge you to pass this critical legislation now.

Sincerely,

David A. Rosman, MD, MBA  
President, MMS

Sara G. Shields, MD, MS, FAAFP  
Chair, MMS Committee on Maternal &  
Perinatal Welfare