

Shepherdstown Friends Meeting Minute on Reproductive Health Care Freedom

Preface for Discernment on Reproductive Health Care

In the United States, strict restrictions on abortion ended with the 1973 Supreme Court's decision known as *Roe v. Wade*. That decision came to be regarded as "settled law" until 2022 with the *Dobbs* decision last year. States were given the power to regulate and severely restrict reproductive health care. In this new era, the Friends Committee for National Legislation has asked Friends Meetings to discern whether they are in unity about reproductive health care, including abortion. The Shepherdstown Friends Meeting has been engaged in exploring possible unity on these issues.

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We, the Shepherdstown Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, draw on our Quaker value of compassion and our core belief that each of us has access to the Divine Light. We hold these values as our guidance when seeking discernment on the issue of reproductive health care.

We are in unity on the issue of reproductive health care freedom for women. We are not for or against abortion. We support the right of individuals to make healthcare decisions free of intimidation and legislative interference. A pregnant person considering an abortion should be free to make a decision that aligns with their spiritual beliefs and their personal situation without restrictions and with full access to medical advice and supportive care.

We are in unity in opposing any action by the government at the federal, state or local levels that bans or restricts access to reproductive health care, including abortion. The government and society should support women and families in ways that nurture the healthy growth and development of all members. This includes access to health care, childcare, affordable housing, and education that addresses human sexuality.

As Quakers, we believe in continuing revelation, trusting that more will be revealed through spiritual discernment about women's reproductive health care freedom. We recognize that individuals will make different decisions. As Friends, we support their freedom to make their decisions and we strive to withhold judgment and to respond with compassion and respect for all.

Adopted by the Shepherdstown Friends Meeting, WV, on Sept 10, 2023.