

July 29, 2019

To the Legislators of Massachusetts,

On behalf of Catholics for Choice, I'd like to express my utmost support for the ROE Act and urge you to back this critical piece of legislation. Massachusetts is home to nearly 2.8 million Catholics (41 percent of the Commonwealth's population) who, like Catholics throughout the United States, rely upon their individual conscience when making decisions about reproductive health services—including abortion.

Most Catholic voters in Massachusetts and across the United States support access to safe, legal abortion care. In fact, recent [polling](#) from our partners at NARAL found that 78 percent of all voters (and 72 percent of Catholics) in Massachusetts support a state law to guarantee a legal right to abortion, as the ROE Act would effectively do. It is the right thing to do and also has the support of Massachusetts residents, including Catholics.

As Catholics, we are called by our faith to follow our conscience in all matters of moral decision-making and to respect the right and duty of others to do the same. We expect our elected officials to safeguard our freedom to make conscience-based decisions and not bargain away women's rights to serve the Bishops' – or anyone else's – ultraconservative agenda. Rather, we are counting on you to protect the common good and adhere to the principle that we cannot and should not interfere in any other person's right to make his or her own moral decisions.

Women are moral decision makers and consider their options carefully when faced with a decision regarding pregnancy. They deserve to exercise their moral and legal right to terminate a pregnancy, which they may do for a number of reasons, without obstacles or fear of persecution. Catholic women have abortions at the same rate as other women. They make their choices related to pregnancy not in spite of their faith, but because of it. The ROE Act would protect the right of every woman in Massachusetts to access the safe, legal abortion care she needs in her home state.

(more)

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Religious freedom is an expansive rather than restrictive idea. It is not about telling people what they can and cannot believe or practice, but about giving people the space to follow their own consciences in what they believe and practice. Protections for religious freedom do not give license to obstruct or coerce the exercise of another person's conscience. Equal justice under the law should be more than a slogan. Religious liberty is, and should always be, sacred to us all, and it is up to each of us to ensure that the religious liberty guaranteed to Massachusetts residents is not compromised for a political gain by an influential minority—even, perhaps especially, when that minority claims a religious mantle as a justification for its actions. The ROE Act codifies the principles of reproductive freedom into state law to prevent any further restrictions on safe, legal abortion and attacks on religious liberty in the Commonwealth.

Again, I urge you to do the right thing by the people of Massachusetts and support the ROE Act. You were elected to represent the entirety of your constituencies, and your actions in the legislature should reflect what they want and need. The people of Massachusetts want and need for the ROE Act to become the law of the land in the Commonwealth.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jon O'Brien". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J" and "O".

Jon O'Brien
President