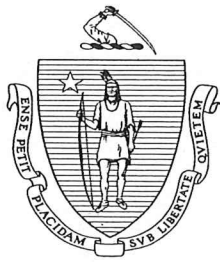


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Dec. 24, 2020

at 1:35 pm



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
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CHARLES D. BAKER
GOVERNOR

KARYN E. POLITO
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

December 24, 2020

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives,

Pursuant to Part the Second, Chapter I, Section I, Article II of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, I am returning unsigned House Bill No. 5179, "An Act providing for access to reproductive health services."

This bill was originally included as an outside section in the budget, and I returned a compromise version to the Legislature that reflected my objections. As I said in my amendment letter, I strongly support a woman's right to access reproductive health care, and many provisions of this bill. I support, for example, the provision that would enable a woman to access an abortion where the child would not survive after birth, and the modifications to the judicial bypass process that make it more accessible to minors who are unable to obtain the consent of a parent or guardian. I also support the changes that eliminate many outdated requirements and the 24-hour waiting period.

However, I cannot support the sections of this proposal that expand the availability of later-term abortions and permit minors age 16 and 17 to get an abortion without the consent of a parent or guardian. I, therefore, again urge the Legislature to enact the compromise version of this bill that would affirmatively protect a woman's right to access an abortion, but would restore the existing framework around late-term abortions and parental consent.

For these reasons, I am returning House Bill No. 5179 unsigned.

Respectfully submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charles D. Baker".

Charles D. Baker,
Governor