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Written Testimony on Senate Constitutional Resolution 30, Resolution Proposing a State Constitutional Amendment to Recognize a Right of Personal Reproductive Autonomy and Freedom

Senator Flexer, Representative Fox, Ranking Members Sampson and Mastrofrancesco, and distinguished members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee:

My name is Jess Zaccagnino, and I am the policy counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT). I am submitting written testimony on Senate Constitutional Resolution 30, Resolution Proposing a State Constitutional Amendment to Recognize a Right of Personal Reproductive Autonomy and Freedom.

Access to abortion is not just about its legality, but it is also about humanity, dignity, and freedom. As the U.S. Supreme Court appears ready to turn its back on nearly fifty years of precedent in *Roe v. Wade* and its progeny, the threat to abortion rights is very real. People across the country could be forced to remain pregnant against their will, endangering their mental and physical health, their lives and futures, and their family's lives and futures. Because of systemic racism, we know that those hurt first and worst by these attempts are Black and Latinx people, and those who are low income. The promise of *Roe* has never been a reality for everyone in this country, and in the coming months that promise might be gutted entirely.

Although Connecticut has been a leader in reproductive freedom, for many people the right to an abortion is in name only because of limited access to abortion care. People who live right here, in Connecticut, still have to scrape together money and seek help from strangers just to afford abortion care, something that is their legal right. It is on every elected official in our state to do better for them. Across the country and in

Connecticut, economic injustice, systemic racism, documentation status, targeted restrictions of abortion providers, and the criminalization of pregnancy outcomes have kept abortion access out of reach for people of color, young people, LGBTQ+ people, and lower-income people. Last year was a record-breaking year for the number of anti-abortion restrictions raised and enacted across the country.¹

Connecticut must act quickly to dismantle barriers to abortion access and ensure that abortion is accessible, affordable, and available to all. Everyone deserves access to abortion care in their community, on the timeline they choose, and by the provider they trust. We are thankful to our champions who have introduced critical pro-choice bills this session, like H.B. 5414 and H.B. 5261, that will expand abortion access in our state and protect patients and providers in Connecticut from other states' severe abortion bans.

The ACLU-CT believes in a future where everyone can make decisions about pregnancy and parenting that are the best for them, which includes access to safe, legal, and affordable abortion. As anti-abortion politicians across the country deny our freedom and obstruct access to abortion, the ACLU-CT is grateful to this Committee for prioritizing abortion access for our state's residents. The ACLU-CT strongly supports measures that protect the right to access an abortion and urges this Committee to do the same.