RRA Resolution in Support of Reproductive Health Care and Reproductive Justice

January 2024 submitted by Rabbi Elyse Wechterman

*Whereas* the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association affirmed its commitment to abortion access as a right in 1981 and reaffirmed this position in 1982,*

*Whereas* Jewish tradition affirms the infinite value of human life as it is expressed in the Biblical affirmation that all human beings are created in the Divine image and judges the decision to terminate a pregnancy to be a most serious matter,

*Whereas* a survey of decisions rendered by recognized Halakhic (Jewish legal) authorities over the centuries has determined that the abortion of a fetus, though a diminishing of the Divine image, is not judged to be murder at any time prior to birth and that abortion is warranted, indeed may be required, when the fetus threatens the life or health (either physical or psychological) of the pregnant individual,

*Whereas* Reconstructionist Judaism affirms the values of democracy, pluralism, and individual freedom in both Jewish and general life, and recognizes the values of multiple and diverse religious and theological viewpoints on issues such as the beginning of human life and the decision to continue or terminate a pregnancy,

*Whereas* Reconstructionist Judaism applauds and upholds the US Constitution's commitment to the free exercise of religion, as outlined in the First Amendment to the Constitution,

*Whereas* in 2022, the Supreme Court of the United States struck down the landmark 1973 Roe v. Wade decision affirming the constitutional right to abortion and precipitated an unparalleled crisis in abortion access and access to reproductive healthcare more generally in the United States,

*Whereas* even before the overturning of Roe v. Wade, reproductive health care, including abortion, was inaccessible to many, especially people of color, young people, LGBTQ+ people, and individuals with disabilities,

*Whereas* in the years between 1972 and today, multiple attempts have been made and legislation enacted to limit funding of and restrict access to reproductive healthcare, including abortion, through US government programs and institutions, including Medicare, international aid programs, in the US military, and in the provision if healthcare access through employer provided health insurance,

*Whereas* multiple states and territories of the United States have restricted access to reproductive healthcare and abortion access, including banning abortion completely and recriminalizing abortion provision,

*Whereas* these restrictions on reproductive healthcare and abortion access have also resulted in limiting access to birth control generally and placed unhealthy and narrow restrictions on educating young people about sexuality, their bodies, and healthy decision making,

*Therefore, be it resolved* that The Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association affirms that access to reproductive health care, including abortion, and the preservation of bodily autonomy is a human right.

The RRA further affirms the right of all people, including women, intersex, gender nonconforming, and transgender individuals, to choose the continuation or termination of a pregnancy as a matter of conscience, bodily integrity, and an expression human dignity.

The RRA further affirms its support for comprehensive sexuality education, access to contraception and pregnancy planning, emergency contraception (such as Plan B), period parity, access to maternal healthcare, and access to LGBTQ+ inclusive and gender-affirming healthcare.

The RRA affirms its opposition to federal and state legislation limiting access to abortion and reproductive healthcare, including requirements for waiting periods, restrictions on counseling and information provision, parental-notification and consent requirements for minors seeking abortion care, limitations on insurance coverage for abortion care and limitations on federal and state funding for abortion care.

In recognition of the fact that People of Color and other marginalized individuals have born the brunt of the burden of unwanted pregnancies and forced childrearing, the RRA further commits to supporting economic equity and racial justice in the provision of abortion care, reproductive care, parental and child healthcare.

The RRA further affirms its support for federal legislation, such as the Women's Health Care Protection Act to create a federal right to abortion access and reproductive healthcare.

The RRA further commits to joining in coalition with other Jewish and multifaith efforts to support access to abortion care and reproductive healthcare through federal and state legislative advocacy and court action, including advocating for the repeal of the legislation limiting federal funding of reproductive healthcare.

The RRA further encourages ongoing education of our members and the communities we serve on issues of reproductive justice and access to reproductive healthcare for all people.