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CA Assembly Judiciary Committee Passes Bill Banning Discrimination Based on Reproductive Health Choices

(*Sacramento, CA*): NARAL Pro-Choice California applauded the passage of a plan to ban discrimination against Californians based on their personal reproductive health choices today. The Reproductive Health Non-Discrimination Act (AB 569) passed out of the Judiciary Committee by a vote of 9 to 1. RHND, introduced by Assemblymember Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher (D-San Diego) and sponsored by NARAL Pro-Choice California and California Latinas for Reproductive Justice, would protect Californians from workplace discrimination based on their personal reproductive health care decisions, like accessing contraception, abortion, or in vitro fertilization.

“All Californians should have the ability to make private decisions that affect their reproductive health, economic security, and other aspects of their lives without employers intruding,” said Amy Everitt, state director of NARAL Pro-Choice California. **“With this vote, California is sending a message that we stand against discrimination in all its forms and that our ability to determine if, when, and with whom to raise a family is central to ensuring our economic security.”**

Acclaimed women’s rights attorney Gloria Allred testified in support of the bill. She represented Teri James, who was fired for becoming pregnant while unmarried, and spoke about her case before the committee.

“Teri James and her husband Brandon were very courageous to speak out against this injustice and Teri has asked me to inform the Assembly Judiciary Committee that she supports AB 569,” said Allred in her testimony. **“Teri feels that her baby is a blessing. She was honest about her pregnancy and she was not willing to lie about it in order to keep her job. She does not want what happened to her to happen to anyone else.”**

“Latinas have the largest pay gap across the U.S., where a Latina working full-time, year-round in California is paid 43 cents for every dollar paid to a white, non-Latino full-time, year-round male worker. This extraordinary pay gap and over-representation in low-wage industry jobs makes achieving economic security more difficult for Latina workers and their families,” said Laura Jimenez, Executive Director of California Latinas for Reproductive Justice. **“The passage of AB 569 out of the Assembly Judiciary Committee is a step toward passing a good policy and a matter of survival for Latinas whose precarious economic stability relies on California strengthening labor workplace protections that don't hinder our reproductive autonomy.”**

This bill is moving through the legislature at a time of unprecedented threats to reproductive freedom by anti-choice politicians. At the federal level, there continues to be a push for overly broad restrictions on our ability to access reproductive care under the guise of “religious freedom.” For example, in a recently leaked draft of a [sweeping executive order](#), the Trump administration proposed a broader definition of “religious liberty” that would allow employers to discriminate against women and LGBTQ individuals in the workplace.

The RHND has the support of more than 50 organizations, including [16 faith groups](#) across California. These religious organizations who urged the passage of AB 569 in an interfaith letter cited the importance of respecting all people’s personal health care decisions and not using religious freedom as a license to discriminate.

Act by Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher

Approved by Committee

Civil Rights Attorney Gloria Allred Testifies in Support of Legislation

SACRAMENTO – (*Tuesday, April 25, 2017*) –California State Assemblywoman Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher (D-San Diego) today won approval of her legislation to outlaw employee conduct codes that infringe on the reproductive health and freedom of women. Assembly Bill 569 was approved by the Assembly Judiciary Committee with a vote of 9-1. The Assemblywoman was joined for her presentation by civil rights attorney Gloria Allred.

“No woman should ever be fired for making the choice to have a baby, and this bill will outlaw a glaring loophole that still lets employers grossly violate the privacy of the women who work for them,” Assemblywoman Gonzalez Fletcher said. “Nobody should be forced to sign away control of their reproductive health as a condition of employment.”

"In 2012 Teri [James] became pregnant. She was unmarried at the time. She was honest about her pregnancy and she was not willing to lie about it in order to keep her job." said Gloria Allred, the attorney who filed the lawsuit on behalf of Ms. James. "She does not want what happened to her to happen to anyone else. We ask for your support of the bill protecting workers from discrimination based on reproductive health choices."

The Reproductive Health Non Discrimination Act was introduced by Assemblywoman Gonzalez Fletcher after it was reported in the media that Teri James, an employee at a San Diego-area private college, was fired after administration discovered she had become pregnant. Ms. James was terminated for violating the employee code of conduct. AB 569 outlaws the use of codes of conduct that deny employees the right to make reproductive health decisions. The bill also makes it explicit in state law that no employee can be fired for making reproductive healthcare decisions, including having children, seeking fertility treatments or using contraception.

For more information on the AB 569, or to schedule an interview with Assemblywoman Gonzalez Fletcher, contact John Vigna at [\(916\) 319-2080](tel:9163192080) or [\(916\) 212-0357](tel:9162120357).