



**COMMISSION FOR WOMEN RECOMMENDATION 20220713-6:
Support the GRACE Act**

Date: July 13, 2022

Subject: Support the GRACE Act

Motioned By: Rebecca Austen

Seconded By: Flannery Bope

Recommendation to Council

WHEREAS, the Commission for Women (“Commission”) of the City of Austin (“City”) serves as an advisory body that advocates for and inspires the City Council (“Council”) and City Manager to prioritize women’s quality of life, so that Austin becomes the most equitable city in the nation for women and girls; and

WHEREAS, all people have a basic human right to bodily autonomy, safe and effective medical treatment, and control over private medical decisions; and

WHEREAS, access to safe and legal abortion is a deciding factor in long-term health, safety, and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court of the United States overturned the 1973 landmark ruling, *Roe v. Wade*, which previously prevented individual states from directly banning abortion care; and

WHEREAS, cisgender women and girls, transgender men and boys, non-binary people, and others who can become pregnant are restricted from access to abortion in Texas and many other states; and

WHEREAS, Texas Senate Bill 8 bans abortions after six weeks gestation and allows private citizens to sue abortion providers, Texas House Bill 1280 criminalizes abortion at the felony level with a sentence of up to 99 years in prison and no exception for rape or incest, and Article 4512 from the 1925 penal code has been put forth as still in force and states that whoever furnishes the means for procuring an abortion knowing the purpose intended is guilty as an accomplice; and

WHEREAS, Black and Latina individuals, and those of all races living in poverty, will likely be disproportionately impacted by bans and criminalization of abortion; and

WHEREAS, children and adults who get pregnant through sexual assault, rape, incest, sex trafficking and other forms of sexual violence will experience forced pregnancies; and

WHEREAS, individuals who are denied abortion access are at risk of experiencing increased anxiety and other mental health issues; and

WHEREAS, individuals who identify as female in Austin are experiencing higher levels of poor mental health overall than males (per data presented to the Commission by the Community Advancement Network on July 15, 2022), and transgender and nonbinary individuals in Austin are disproportionately impacted by mental health issues and access to care and resources (per the [LGBTQIA+ Quality of Life study](#)), compounding the mental health impacts for these individuals who are capable of becoming pregnant and are denied access to abortion; and

WHEREAS, the Commission approved [Recommendation 20220302-002d: Recommendations for Women Affected by SB8](#) on March 2, 2022, proposing that the City of Austin allocate funding for legal support, travel to other states for abortion care, as well as healthcare for those that choose to continue their pregnancy;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Commission for Women recommends that the Council adopts the GRACE Act ([draft](#)) to protect the rights of residents to make reproductive health decisions, including abortion care; to protect personal health information related to abortion, miscarriages, and other aspects of reproductive healthcare; and to limit investigations or prosecutions of pregnancy-related outcomes.

Date of Approval: July 13, 2022

Record of the vote: Passed on a 7-1 vote, with Chair Austen, Vice Chair Bope, Commissioners Tau, Gonzales, Melendez, and Serrata, Fernandez, Cortez in favor; Commissioner Rattan against; and two commissioners absent.

Attest: *Kiarrah Carlisle*
Kiarrah Carlisle, Staff Liaison