



THE WOMXN PROJECT
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Testimony in Support of H 5629, Fertility Health Care Coverage

March 13, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Renee Bernard, and I am a proud mother of three amazing children as well as a board member to The Womxn Project. I am writing in major support of the Fertility Health Care Coverage bill for myself and our organization.

This is my journey to motherhood and why access to fertility treatments and family planning is so important.

My mother, a nurse and one of the kindest, most selfless people I've ever known, became a foster parent in her 50s. She and her husband welcomed children into their home, one at a time, fostering around 10 to 15 over the years. Each holiday season, we still cherish the Christmas ornaments they made, a tradition my own children now love.

I always knew I wanted to have children. As a lesbian, I never questioned if I would—only how. At 35, I married and began family planning. In my early optimism, I imagined having five children. I felt strongly about adoption, believing that with so many children in need of loving homes, it was my responsibility to provide one. My wife and I decided we would have one biological child and adopt four.

We started with at-home fertility treatments, tracking temperatures, researching, and searching for a donor. We tried intrauterine insemination (IUI) and intracervical insemination (ICI) for a year—each month costing about \$1,000. By the end of 2007, after \$12,000 and countless emotional ups and downs, we were still not pregnant.

During this time, my mother was fostering a baby named Javien. He had been placed with her at just nine weeks old, and as he grew, DCYF determined he would be eligible for adoption. Without hesitation, we decided to adopt



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him. He came home to us at 18 months old, and by May, his adoption was finalized.

At the same time, we pursued the next step in our fertility journey—in vitro fertilization (IVF). Because we had been trying for over a year, we qualified under the same criteria as heterosexual couples. Thankfully, my insurance covered the treatment, and after just one cycle, we were pregnant—with twins.

We adopted our son, Javien, and then, in June, found out we were expecting two more. Today, Javien is 18 and working at Electric Boat, while my twin daughters are 16, learning to drive and preparing for college. The journey was not easy, but I wouldn't change a thing.

Infertility is a medical condition that requires medical treatment—no different from treating hypertension, diabetes, or erectile dysfunction. My infertility was caused by endometriosis and fibroids, which led to numerous medical tests, including pelvic ultrasounds, sonohysterograms, hysteroscopies, and hysterosalpingograms. After undergoing a thorough workup, IVF gave me the chance to conceive.

I am incredibly grateful to have had access to fertility treatment. My story is proof of why supporting family planning and fertility care is essential. Every individual deserves the opportunity to build a family, regardless of who they are or who they love without facing financial barriers and the burden of debt.

Sincerely,
Renee Bernard
Board Member, The Womxn Project