

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 22, 2022

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: COUNCILMAN R. KIRK McPIKE & VICE MAYOR AMY JACKSON

SUBJECT: FURTHER STEPS TO PROTECT ACCESS TO REPRODUCTIVE CHOICE
AND RELATED SERVICES IN ALEXANDRIA

After the meeting in June at which the Council passed the resolution supporting continued access to reproductive health services in the City in the wake of the *Dobbs v. Jackson* decision by the Supreme Court, we attended a public meeting of the Alexandria Commission for Women.

At that meeting, the Commission presented various ideas for what the the City could do to support access to reproductive health services in the City, provide clear information to the public on the availability of such services and promote the availability of that information, address organizations that provide misleading information about reproductive choice, and improve the availability of emergency and long-acting reversible contraception.

According to feedback to these suggestions provided by the City Attorney, the ability of the City to take meaningful steps on these issues is in some cases constrained by Virginia law, the Dillon Rule, and Federal case law.

Further, should abortion be made illegal in Virginia by an action of the General Assembly, there is nothing the City could do to counteract that. However, many of the suggestions from the Commission were workable under current law, and we believe that we should act upon them.

Considering the Commission's recommendations and the City Attorney's advice, we recommend that the City Council instruct the City Manager to take the following actions:

1. Work with the Office of Communications and Public Information to:
 - a. Create a dedicated page on the City's website that provides accurate and clear information regarding how to access both reproductive health services in the city

Further, we agree with the Commission's suggestion that once the website page in item 1 is published the Mayor should send a letter on behalf of the City Council to Google and other internet search engine companies. In this letter, the City should ask them to be mindful of the danger of misinformation regarding reproductive health services and request that they prevent websites hosted by anti-reproductive choice organizations from appearing above the City's website page when users search for information about such services in Alexandria.

cc: Jim Parajon, City Manager
Joanna Anderson, City Attorney