

Testimony for Madison Common Council.

My name is Cynthia Lin, and I'm here tonight to speak in support of Resolution 37488, introduced two weeks ago by Lisa Subeck and co-sponsored by Marsha Rummel and Ledell Zellers. The resolution calls on Congress to reinstate public funding for abortions so that all women and all people who can get pregnant have access to a full range of reproductive options – regardless of their income or their zipcode. Every single one of us deserves the right to make the best healthcare decisions for ourselves and our families, and we need to struggle together so that we ensure we leave no one behind.

Now, I know I'm not the only one to observe that the timing ... doesn't feel quite right. At a time when Madison is reeling from the police killing of an unarmed, young gifted and Black 19-year-old named Tony Robinson. When Wisconsin is ranked one of the worst states for Black people to live in – based on indicators of education, incarceration and policing, poverty and welfare, and health. And this very night this building has been buzzing with community members demanding that we build the people and not the jails.

When time and time again advocacy in our city has failed to fully center the voices of those most directly affected when our systems not only fail us but indeed are designed to ensure that certain among us fall through the cracks. When we are in a dynamic and historic and incredibly important moment that is absolutely is about clamoring that Black Lives Matter and about following the beautiful, brilliant, and deeply righteous leadership of the folks of color uniting to say this stops here.

. . . In political moment like this, why are we talking about abortion?

One in three women of reproductive age in the US has an abortion. 50% of pregnancies are unintended, and about half of those are carried to term. Many people in our communities face enormous barriers in order to make the deeply personal decision about whether or not to carry a pregnancy to term. One of the most important is the Hyde Amendment, which was passed in 1976 on the heels of *Roe v. Wade*, which bans the use of public funding for abortion. That means that anyone on Badgercare can't use their health coverage to pay for the abortion that they choose to have.

We know that when politicians cut public services and funding, communities of color are always most disproportionately affected. I've lived in the City of Madison for about a decade – I've been away a little while, but I'm back now – and this is consistent with a trend of who bears the burden of funding cuts, of safety, of others' quality of life in our city. I now have the honor and privilege to work for the National Network of Abortion Funds, a network of grassroots organizations that are mostly led by volunteers who raise money and give it to people who need abortions but can't pay for them out of pocket. Women's Medical Fund of Wisconsin is a local member based right here in Madison. (Nora Cusack is WMF treasurer and couldn't make it tonight but sent comments to all of the alders). Fund activists like Nora are the ones on the other end of the line for someone to call when women are running the gauntlet of abortion access barriers. Funds know all too well that access to the full range of reproductive decisionmaking is a racial justice issue, and it's an economic justice issue. *And* it is incumbent upon us to put it in a reproductive justice framework.

Reproductive justice is, and I'm quoting the esteemed organization SisterSong, RJ is "the right to have children, to not have children, and to parent the children we have in safe and healthy environments... [Reproductive justice] is based on the human right to make personal decisions about one's life, and the obligation of government and society to ensure that the conditions are suitable for implementing one's decisions" is a vital part of that.

Ending the Hyde Amendment is a plank in a broad platform for reproductive freedom and self-determination for all our communities.

It's just one, and it's an important one. 1 in 7 women of reproductive age is enrolled in Medicaid, and about half are women of color. In the City of Madison alone, more than 5000 people of reproductive age are currently enrolled in Badgercare and other forms of public insurance and directly affected by the Hyde Amendment. By voting yes on this resolution, the Madison Common Council would join other local elected leaders in other cities in declaring that all people have the right to a full range of reproductive options, including abortion, and that no politician should stand in the way.

Ending Hyde is just one plank in a platform for justice – and it's a big one! - but it's not the only one. Just as rights are meaningless without access, access isn't enough if not we can't place it in the context of the broader reproductive freedoms that all our communities need to experience the conditions of a full, safe, thriving and self-determined life - and that includes freedom from police violence, and more dollars for community centers and less for jails. It includes getting more people access to Badgercare. It includes a living wage, and the rights of workers to organize. So let's keep connecting the dots so that Madison is a place where all of our community thrive.

Thank you for your time tonight, and for Alders Subeck, Rummel and Zellers for their leadership in bringing this measure to the table.