



Warrant Article 31: Protecting Access to Reproductive & Gender Affirming Care in Natick

Presentation to Finance Committee

Background

JUNE 2022

Supreme Court rules in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*. Many states immediately **criminalize or otherwise penalize reproductive health care**, and some enact **“aiding and abetting”** laws. States also enact laws **limiting or banning gender affirming health care**.

Gov. Baker issues Executive Order 600, Protecting Access to Reproductive Healthcare Services in the Commonwealth

JULY 2022

Mass. G.L. ch. 147 § 63 prohibits **state employees and any police officer** from cooperating with attempts by other states and private individuals from those states to enforce these laws against people who seek reproductive and gender affirming care in Massachusetts.

Warrant Article 31

Extends existing state law Mass. G.L. ch. 147 § 63 (which already applies to Natick Police) to all municipal employees.

Prohibits any municipal employee from **sharing information or using town resources** to assist out-of-state actors seeking to criminally or civilly **punish someone for obtaining healthcare that is protected in Massachusetts.**

Protects Natick residents and visitors who either receive healthcare that is protected in Massachusetts, or provide support to those who do (e.g. “aiding and abetting”)
Protects municipal employees who receive a request for information in support of criminal or civil sanctions.

Why is Article 31 needed?

Natick is located near some of the best medical care in the world - and Massachusetts has documented a **significant increase in people coming from out of state to receive reproductive and gender affirming healthcare** since June 2022.

19 states' **Attorneys General are explicitly and actively exploring ways to criminally sanction or impose civil liability on someone for exercising their rights under Massachusetts law** to receive reproductive or gender affirming healthcare services here or helping someone receive those services. (Boston Globe, Alabama.Com)

Gap exists between state law and municipal law because some municipal employees are not covered.

3 Examples: How Art. 31 Applies to Natick Residents

A Natick High Graduate

who attends college in Texas flies home to her family in Massachusetts after discovering she is pregnant. She obtains an abortion in Boston before going back to school in Texas. Texas law enforcement seeks records regarding the Natick residents' presence in Natick during a particular time frame.

A parent and child relocate from Florida to Natick

in order to ensure the child can continue receiving gender affirming healthcare. The child is enrolled in Natick Public Schools, attends a town camp, and has a library card. The non-custodial parent in Florida accuses the custodial parent in Natick of child abuse because the child receives gender affirming care. Florida Child Protective Services requests records from the Library, the Natick Public Schools, and the Parks & Recreation Department.

A Natick resident provides tele-mental health counseling

to patients across the country, including a client in Oklahoma. The counselor informs the client about health care options that are legal in other states. An Oklahoma resident sues the Natick resident for aiding and abetting their patient in obtaining healthcare legally, and requests records regarding the Natick resident from the town and state.

Other Municipalities With SHIELD Laws

Nearly identical provisions to those proposed in this motion have been adopted in:

Salem, Brookline, and Somerville.

Similar proposals are actively under consideration in several other municipalities as well including Worcester, Northampton, and Amherst.

This is a modest but important step to protect the rights of Natick's residents and visitors.