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**TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO 20 – H 7355  
HOUSE RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE FETUS AS A HUMAN LIFE UPON THE  
EXISTENCE OF A HEARTBEAT  
February 25, 2020**

The ACLU is opposed to this resolution, which claims to “recognize” that the existence of a fetal heartbeat or flutter is evidence of the existence of human life. Although this resolution would not legally alter the standards of *Roe v. Wade* or the statutory protections that the General Assembly enacted last year through the Reproductive Privacy Act, passage of the resolution would promote extremely harmful, medically inaccurate ideologies that are counter to the critical tenets of reproductive freedom codified just last session.

This resolution is symbolically harmful and scientifically inappropriate, and could also act as the reference point in the future for potential attempts at restrictive legislation concerning abortion rights. The risk for this resolution to act as the basis for any proposed limitation on abortion once a heartbeat is detected – a type of law which has been challenged in many other states by the ACLU due to its invasive hindrance of the medical process and the onerous barriers it places on patients – is one that cannot and should not be ignored.

While abortion rights are now comprehensively protected by the provisions of the RPA, it is still critical to prevent any type of legislative assertion based on dangerous ideological perspectives of abortion that seeks to undermine this law. The General Assembly proactively and positively recognized both the necessity for bodily autonomy and the importance of guaranteeing the right for patients and doctors to make thoughtful and appropriate medical decisions without political intervention. There is no reason that, less than a year later, the legislature should negate this important codification and erode, in any capacity, the recognition that access to safe and legal abortion is protected in Rhode Island.

Thank you for your consideration.