**News Release — At-large DC Council member Christina Henderson**

**For Immediate Release**

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Contact: Amanda Farnan

Washington, DC – Today, Councilmember Christina Henderson introduced the Enhancing Reproductive Health Protections Amendment Act of 2022. This legislation will clarify that an individual assisting an individual self-managing their abortion shall not be penalized. The steps this legislation takes are especially necessary today to reaffirm the District’s commitment as a jurisdiction that values unrestricted reproductive health access.

“In the past year, we’ve seen unprecedented action against a woman’s right to choose in states across the country. We want to make it abundantly clear in our local laws that in the District of Columbia we are a safe haven for women seeking unrestricted access to reproductive health care,” said **Councilmember Henderson**. “The use of FDA-approved medication provides a safe, effective, and simple option to manage pregnancy with or without the supervision of a health care professional. The use of the medication is already protected under DC law. However, the law remains unclear for family, friends, or health professionals assisting an individual with the process. This legislation would expressly protect those who support or assist individuals in need of such care.”

The District is seeking the residual impact of increased criminalization of reproductive health in other states. In 2019, 68% of abortions performed in DC were patients who were not District residents. One report in 2021 by the Guttmacher Institute measured an increase in Texas residents traveling and receiving reproductive health care in DC, after the implementation of a new overly restrictive abortion access law, that also punishes individuals who assist those seeking abortions. With the uncertainty of the future of Roe v. Wade, it’s important that our local laws provide the utmost protection for individuals seeking an abortion and those who assist with the process.

“The decision to protect people who self-manage their abortions, and the people who help them, is the tide-turning, meet the moment opportunity that I hope more cities and states move toward and ensure everyone within their borders is protected no matter the outcomes of their pregnancies,” said **Renee Bracey Sherman, Founder and Executive Director of We Testify**. “Those who are most likely to be criminalized are disproportionately Black and Brown and those who don’t have the money or means to protect themselves legally. This change is a move towards abortion justice and racial justice.”

This legislation would first, clarify that an individual assisting another individual who is seeking, inducing, or attempting to induce that individual’s own abortion shall not be penalized. Second, it clarifies that any individual’s act of providing, dispensing, administering, or transferring possession of a product used for self-managed abortions, to an individual who is self-managing an abortion shall not be penalized.

The Enhancing Reproductive Health Protections Amendment Act of 2022 was co-introduced by Chairman Phil Mendelson, Councilmembers Janeese Lewis George, Brianne K. Nadeau, Mary M. Cheh, Brooke Pinto, Elissa Silverman, Anita Bonds, Charles Allen, and Kenyan R. McDuffie.

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