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July 24, 2025

VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
Chair
U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Nomination of Chad Meredith for the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Kentucky

Dear Senators Grassley and Durbin:

On behalf of the National Women's Law Center (the "Law Center"), an organization that has advocated on behalf of women and girls for over fifty years, we write in strong opposition to the nomination of Mr. Chad Meredith for the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Kentucky.

Mr. Meredith's legal record demonstrates a concerning disregard for the medical autonomy of pregnant people and a dedication to undermining access to abortion. As Chief Deputy General Counsel of Kentucky, he defended Kentucky's forced ultrasound law¹ as well as severe and medically unnecessary licensing regulations imposed on abortion clinics.² In his legal arguments, Mr. Meredith asserts that the state government is best positioned to provide medical information to pregnant people to allow them to make decisions about their care, even more so than their physicians. His arguments also intentionally minimize the undue burden that restrictive anti-abortion laws impose on people seeking care.³ Additionally, Mr. Meredith has led numerous

¹ *EMW Women's Surgical Center v. Beshear*, 920 F.3d 421 (6th Cir. 2019), available at <https://www.opn.ca6.uscourts.gov/opinions.pdf/19a0062p-06.pdf>; Ky. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 311.727, available at <https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/law/statutes/statute.aspx?id=44107>.

² *EMW Women's Surgical Center v. Friedlander*, 978 F.3d 418 (6th Cir. 2020), available at <https://www.opn.ca6.uscourts.gov/opinions.pdf/20a0332p-06.pdf>; 902 KAR 20:360 § 10(3) (Ky. Admin. Regs. Mar. 11, 2025), available at <https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/Law/kar/titles/902/020/360/>.

³ Ryland Barton, *Appeals Court Hears Arguments Over Kentucky Abortion Ultrasound Requirement*, Louisville Public Media (July 18, 2018), available at <https://www.lpm.org/news/2018-07-25/appeals-court-hears-arguments-over-kentucky-abortion-ultrasound-requirement>.

multi-state amicus briefs in support of anti-abortion laws in Indiana and Tennessee that severely restrict healthcare access.⁴ Mr. Meredith's concerted efforts to undermine the rights and autonomy of pregnant people bely a commitment to equal justice or a willingness to uphold the laws critical to the well-being of women and girls.

Mr. Meredith defended laws that undermine the medical autonomy of pregnant people and disregarded the burdens they face when seeking abortion access.

On behalf of Kentucky, Mr. Meredith sought to undermine the medical autonomy of pregnant people and their physician's First Amendment rights by defending the state's law requiring an ultrasound to receive abortion care.⁵ In *EMW Women's Surgical Center v. Beshear*, Mr. Meredith justifies the interference of the state in the medical decisions of pregnant people by arguing that the law ensures that women seeking abortions are appropriately informed because "not every patient understands the consequences of the abortion procedure."⁶ Prior to this law's passage, Kentucky already had an informed consent law requiring physicians to provide pertinent medical information to patients seeking an abortion and requiring patients to certify that they received the information.⁷ Instead of ensuring pertinent medical information is provided, the 2017 forced ultrasound law undermines the rights of pregnant people and physicians by compelling doctors to display and describe ultrasound images prior to an abortion, even if their patient closes their eyes and begs them to stop.⁸

Informed consent is a cornerstone of medical practice, where the benefits of, risks of, and alternatives to a course of medical treatment are conveyed to a patient to allow for informed and

⁴ Brief of Kentucky, et al. as Amici Curiae in Support of Petitioners, *Whole Woman's Health All. v. Hill*, No. 19-743 (U.S. Jan. 10, 2020), available at <https://www.ag.ky.gov/about/Office-Divisions/Amicus%20Briefs/19-743%20Amicus%20Brief%20Kentucky.pdf>; Brief of Kentucky, et al. as Amici Curiae in Support of Petitioners, *Box v. Planned Parenthood of Indiana and Kentucky, Inc.*, No. 19-816 (U.S. Jan. 27, 2020), available at <https://www.ag.ky.gov/about/Office-Divisions/Amicus%20Briefs/2020-01-27%20Box%20v.%20Planned%20Parenthood.pdf>; Amici Curiae in Support of Defendants-Appellants, *Memphis Ctr. for Reprod. Health v. Slatery*, No. 20-5969 (6th Cir. Nov. 16, 2020), available at [www.ag.ky.gov/about/Office-Divisions/Amicus%20Briefs/2020-11-16%20Memphis%20Ctr.%20for%20Reproductive%20Health%20v.%20Slatery%20\(Ky.%20authored\).pdf](http://www.ag.ky.gov/about/Office-Divisions/Amicus%20Briefs/2020-11-16%20Memphis%20Ctr.%20for%20Reproductive%20Health%20v.%20Slatery%20(Ky.%20authored).pdf) [www.ag.ky.gov/about/Office-Divisions/Amicus%20Briefs/2020-11-16%20Memphis%20Ctr.%20for%20Reproductive%20Health%20v.%20Slatery%20\(Ky.%20authored\).pdf](http://www.ag.ky.gov/about/Office-Divisions/Amicus%20Briefs/2020-11-16%20Memphis%20Ctr.%20for%20Reproductive%20Health%20v.%20Slatery%20(Ky.%20authored).pdf).

⁵ *EMW Women's Surgical Center v. Beshear*, 920 F.3d 421 (6th Cir. 2019); Ky. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 311.727 (effective, Jan. 9, 2017), available at <https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/law/statutes/statute.aspx?id=45477>.

⁶ *EMW. Women's Surgical Ctr. v. Beshear*, Nos. 17-6151, 17-6183, at 4:18 (6th Cir. argued July 25, 2025).

⁷ Ky. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 311.725 (2011), available at apps.legislature.ky.gov/law/statutes/statute.aspx?id=49366#:~:text=Page%201-,311.725%20Requirement%20of%20voluntary%20and%20informed%20written%20consent%20for%20abortion,%2D%2D%20Abortions%20in%20med%20ical%20emergencies (requiring doctors to inform patients about the risks and alternatives associated with abortion procedures).

⁸ *EMW Women's Surgical Center v. Beshear*, Nos. 17-6151, 17-6183, at 24:30 (6th Cir. argued July 25, 2025).

patient-centered medical decision-making.⁹ Kentucky's law sought to make receiving an abortion as burdensome and stigmatizing as possible under the guise of informed consent, and Mr. Meredith defended Kentucky's perversion of ethical medical practice, arguing¹⁰ that the state's interest in informed consent outweighed the physicians' First Amendment claims. Mr. Meredith, without evidence, claimed that even with the existing informed consent law, "there are a number of patients who don't understand the nature of the fetus within them."¹¹ His arguments exemplify his paternalistic view of the capacity of pregnant people for self-determination and their ability to make their own decisions informed by awareness of medical risks and benefits. Mr. Meredith's dismissal of pregnant people's autonomous decision-making, coupled with his support for this unnecessary and invasive state mandate, makes it clear that he has little regard for individual rights, particularly when they conflict with his ideological beliefs.

While defending Kentucky's regulations imposing a requirement for transfer agreements between abortion clinics and hospitals to support emergency care,¹² Mr. Meredith demonstrated a disregard for the significant burdens the restrictions would place on people seeking abortion care. Despite repeated, earnest attempts to comply with the strict new regulations, EMW Women's Surgical Center and Planned Parenthood, the only clinics that offered abortions in Kentucky, were denied facility licenses and threatened with closure.¹³ Mr. Meredith defended the state's biased enforcement of the regulation, arguing that the regulation is "not about shutting down abortion clinics but about promoting health and safety."¹⁴ However, the district court found that the regulation was "not medically necessary and [did] absolutely nothing to further the health and safety of women seeking abortions."¹⁵ The court found that rather than promoting health and safety, the elimination of safe and accessible abortion services would have significant negative impact on patient health.¹⁶

Further, Mr. Meredith argued that if Kentucky's last abortion clinic closed, the impact is "essentially none," because Kentucky's "unique" geography means that the furthest someone

⁹ See, e.g., Parth Shah, et al., *Informed Consent*, StatPearls [Internet] (Nov. 24, 2024), available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK430827/>.

¹⁰ *EMW Women's Surgical Ctr. v. Beshear*, Nos. 17-6151, 17-6183, at 6:25 (6th Cir. argued July 25, 2025).

¹¹ *Id.* at 39:00.

¹² 902 KAR 20:360, § 10(3), available at <https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/Law/kar/titles/902/020/360/>.

¹³ *EMW Women's Surgical Ctr. v. Friedlander*, 978 F.3d 418, 423-424 (6th Cir. 2020), available at www.opn.ca6.uscourts.gov/opinions.pdf/20a0332p-06.pdf.

¹⁴ Ryland Barton, *Appeals Court Hears Arguments Over Kentucky Abortion Ultrasound Requirement*, Louisville Public Media (July 18, 2018), available at <https://www.lpm.org/news/2018-07-25/appeals-court-hears-arguments-over-kentucky-abortion-ultrasound-requirement>.

¹⁵ *EMW Women's Surgical Ctr. v. Glisson*, No. 3:17-CV00189-GNS, 2018 WL 6444391, at *25 (W.D. Ky. Sept. 28, 2018), *rev'd EMW Women's Surgical Ctr. v. Friedlander*, 978 F.3d 418 (6th Cir. 2020) (reversed on the grounds that new precedent disallowed consideration of the benefits or lack thereof of the challenged rule).

¹⁶ *EMW Women's Surgical Ctr., P.S.C. v. Friedlander*, Judge Clay dissent at 488.

would need to travel is *only 150 miles* from an abortion clinic in a bordering state.¹⁷ Mr. Meredith exhibits a callous disregard for people who suffer the monetary burdens, the extensive time commitment, and health risks imposed by having to travel long distances to receive proper medical attention. His arguments minimize the burdens faced by people seeking reproductive healthcare in Kentucky and show that he has a skewed perspective regarding the legal rights and wellbeing of women, girls, and pregnant people.

Mr. Meredith led multi-state efforts to undermine and severely limit access to reproductive care in Indiana and Tennessee.

As Solicitor General of Kentucky, Mr. Meredith assumed a leadership role in assembling multi-state coalitions to submit multiple briefs in defense of anti-abortion laws in Indiana and Tennessee, often using radical legal arguments. He is listed as counsel of record on three separate amicus briefs, demonstrating his activism to dismantle the legal right to abortion care in multiple states.¹⁸

In *Whole Woman's Health Alliance v. Hill*, Mr. Meredith submitted an amicus brief representing multiple states in support of Indiana's strict licensing regulation that made it impossible to establish an abortion clinic in the state.¹⁹ The brief asserts that federalism principles and state sovereignty prevents federal courts from interfering in state licensing practices, even when these practices infringe constitutional rights.²⁰ This narrow view of the power of federal courts and the *Ex parte Young* doctrine,²¹ and broad view of state sovereignty, would leave states unaccountable for even grievous constitutional violations if remedying such a violation would

¹⁷ Ryland Barton, *Appeals Court Hears Arguments Over Kentucky Abortion Ultrasound Requirement*, Louisville Public Media (July 18, 2018), available at <https://www.lpm.org/news/2018-07-25/appeals-court-hears-arguments-over-kentucky-abortion-ultrasound-requirement>.

¹⁸ Brief of Kentucky, et al. as Amici Curiae in Support of Petitioners, *Whole Woman's Health All. v. Hill*, No. 19-743 (U.S. Jan. 10, 2020), available at <https://www.ag.ky.gov/about/Office-Divisions/Amicus%20Briefs/19-743%20Amicus%20Brief%20Kentucky.pdf>; Brief of Kentucky, et al. as Amici Curiae in Support of Respondents, *Box v. Planned Parenthood of Ind. & Ky., Inc.*, No. 18-483 (U.S. Jan. 27, 2020), available at <https://www.ag.ky.gov/about/Office-Divisions/Amicus%20Briefs/2020-01-27%20Box%20v.%20Planned%20Parenthood.pdf>; Amici Curiae in Support of Defendants-Appellants, *Memphis Ctr. for Reprod. Health v. Slatery*, No. 20-5969 (6th Cir. Nov. 16, 2020), available at [www.ag.ky.gov/about/Office-Divisions/Amicus%20Briefs/2020-11-16%20Memphis%20Ctr.%20for%20Reproductive%20Health%20v.%20Slatery%20\(Ky.%20authored\).pdf](http://www.ag.ky.gov/about/Office-Divisions/Amicus%20Briefs/2020-11-16%20Memphis%20Ctr.%20for%20Reproductive%20Health%20v.%20Slatery%20(Ky.%20authored).pdf) [www.ag.ky.gov/about/Office-Divisions/Amicus%20Briefs/2020-11-16%20Memphis%20Ctr.%20for%20Reproductive%20Health%20v.%20Slatery%20\(Ky.%20authored\).pdf](http://www.ag.ky.gov/about/Office-Divisions/Amicus%20Briefs/2020-11-16%20Memphis%20Ctr.%20for%20Reproductive%20Health%20v.%20Slatery%20(Ky.%20authored).pdf).

¹⁹ *Hill v. Whole Woman's Health Alliance*, 934 F.3d 810 (7th Cir. 2019), available at <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/appellate-courts/ca7/19-2051/19-2051-2019-08-22.html>; Brief of Kentucky, et al. as Amici Curiae in Support of Petitioners, *Whole Woman's Health All. v. Hill*, No. 19-743 (U.S. Jan. 10, 2020), available at https://www.supremecourt.gov/DocketPDF/19/19-743/128211/20200110134624447_19-743%20Amicus%20Brief%20Kentucky.pdf.

²⁰ Brief of Kentucky, et al. as Amici Curiae in Support of Petitioners, *Whole Woman's Health All. v. Hill*, at 9-16.

²¹ *Ex parte Young*, 209 U.S. 123 (1908) (when a state acts contrary to federal law or to the U.S. Constitution, state officials acting on behalf of states may be enjoined by federal courts despite state sovereignty).

compel a state official to take (rather than refrain from taking) an action. Fortunately, this radical argument has found little purchase in the courts.

In *Box v. Planned Parenthood of Indiana and Kentucky, Inc.*, Mr. Meredith submitted an amicus brief on behalf of a multi-state coalition to urge the U.S. Supreme Court to take up this case and uphold an Indiana law requiring a minor’s parents to be notified when they receive an abortion without parental consent.²² Under this 2017 law, even if a minor receives a judicial waiver from the parental consent to receive an abortion based on a finding that the minor is mature enough to make the abortion decision independently or that an abortion would be in the minor’s best interest, their parents must be notified before the abortion is performed unless the court separately finds it is in the best interests of the minor to withhold parental notification.²³ The brief criticizes the 7th Circuit for treating “the parent-child relationship like it was a medical procedure subject to testing for efficacy and cost.”²⁴ Yet, the brief dismisses the impact or serious harm that parental notification can have on a minor who may potentially live in an abusive home, arguing that due to the lack of “veto power” inherent in parental notification, the potential burden on the minor is “markedly less” than a consent law.²⁵ The effect of this law is to dissuade minors from seeking to access abortion without parental consent, even when the minor is mature enough to make the abortion decision independently or an abortion would be in the minor’s best interest, and stigmatize and punish them for doing so.

Finally, in *Memphis Center for Reproductive Health v. Slatery*, Mr. Meredith submitted an amicus brief on behalf of a multi-state coalition in support of Tennessee’s six-week abortion ban that also prohibits abortion on the basis of race, sex, and certain fetal abnormalities.²⁶ The brief argues that the lower court’s preliminary injunction of the law banning implementation of the so-called “antidiscrimination provision” of the law shows little regard for Tennessee’s interest in

²² *Planned Parenthood of Ind. & Ky., Inc. v. Box*, 949 F.3d 997 (7th Cir. 2019), available at caselaw.findlaw.com/court/us-7th-circuit/2116858.html; Brief of Kentucky, et al. as Amici Curiae in Support of Petitioners, *Box v. Planned Parenthood of Indiana and Kentucky, Inc.*, No. 19-816 (U.S. Jan. 27, 2020), available at <https://www.ag.ky.gov/about/Office-Divisions/Amicus%20Briefs/2020-01-27%20Box%20v.%20Planned%20Parenthood.pdf>.

²³ Ind. Code § 16-34-2-4, available at <https://law.justia.com/codes/indiana/title-16/article-34/chapter-2/section-16-34-2-4/>.

²⁴ Brief of Kentucky, et al. as Amici Curiae in Support of Petitioners, *Box v. Planned Parenthood of Indiana and Kentucky, Inc.*, No. 19-816, at 2 (U.S. Jan. 27, 2020), available at <https://www.ag.ky.gov/about/Office-Divisions/Amicus%20Briefs/2020-01-27%20Box%20v.%20Planned%20Parenthood.pdf>.

²⁵ *Id.* at 5 (“Whatever burden a parental-notice statute imposes on a minor’s ability to obtain an abortion, it is markedly less than a statute requiring parental consent.”).

²⁶ *Memphis Ctr. for Reprod. Health v. Slatery*, 24 F.4th 1069 (6th Cir. 2022), available at <https://www.opn.ca6.uscourts.gov/opinions.pdf/21a0215p-06.pdf>; Brief of Kentucky, et al. as Amici Curiae in Support of Defendants-Appellants, *Memphis Ctr. for Reprod. Health v. Slatery*, No. 20-5969 (6th Cir. Nov. 16, 2020), available at [www.ag.ky.gov/about/Office-Divisions/Amicus%20Briefs/2020-11-16%20Memphis%20Ctr.%20for%20Reproductive%20Health%20v.%20Slatery%20\(Ky.%20authored\).pdf](https://www.ag.ky.gov/about/Office-Divisions/Amicus%20Briefs/2020-11-16%20Memphis%20Ctr.%20for%20Reproductive%20Health%20v.%20Slatery%20(Ky.%20authored).pdf).

“protecting the medical profession” and “stopping invidious discrimination.”²⁷ Mr. Meredith portrayed abortion as little more than a tool for eugenics, and yet, as the 6th Circuit pointed out, there is no evidence that patients are seeking abortion because of the race or sex of the fetus.²⁸ The Court of Appeals thus questioned whether the states’ purported interests were legitimate or merely a pretextual attempt to further limit access to abortion.²⁹ Mr. Meredith further argued that the district court’s finding that the antidiscrimination provision was unconstitutionally vague would endanger other state criminal laws.³⁰ However, the 6th Circuit found that this provisions is substantively different – and more troubling – than other criminal laws that interact with third-party motivations because it would require doctors to “parse through and make causal assessments regarding the but-for motivations” of patients, invading the doctor-patient relationship and establishing doctors as key players in criminal law enforcement.³¹

In each of these amicus briefs, Mr. Meredith’s arguments fail to take into account the impact that laws and regulations that restrict abortion access will have on people seeking abortion care. Mr. Meredith has time and again, demonstrated a disregard for the rights and protections essential to the wellbeing and legal futures of women and girls, which calls into question his ability to be a fair-minded judge committed to equal justice for all people.

Conclusion

Mr. Meredith has a history of making extreme legal arguments to undermine the autonomy of pregnant people to make their own medical decisions and to access abortion care. Many of Mr. Meredith’s arguments demonstrate an extreme disregard for the health and wellbeing of pregnant people, as he repeatedly argues that the state better understands the medical needs of pregnant people than patients themselves or even licensed medical physicians. From his paternalistic views on pregnant people being incapable of understanding and managing their own medical decisions to trivializing the significant burdens caused by anti-abortion laws, Mr. Meredith puts his personal anti-abortion principles before the health and needs of real people. Mr. Meredith’s

²⁷ Brief of Kentucky, et al. as Amici Curiae in Support of Defendants-Appellants, *Memphis Ctr. for Reprod. Health v. Slatery*, at 13,16.

²⁸ *Memphis Ctr. for Reprod. Health v. Slatery*, at *31-2; see also Brief of SisterReach as Amicus Curiae in support of Plaintiffs-Appellees at 25, *Memphis Ctr. for Reprod. Health v. Slatery*, No. 20-5969 (6th Cir. Nov. 16, 2020) (citing Susan A. Cohen, Abortion and Women of Color, GUTTMACHER INST., Aug. 2008, <https://www.guttmacher.org/gpr/2008/08/abortion-and-women-color-biggerpicture> (describing how women of color are more likely to have unintended pregnancies due to socioeconomic inequality, a lack of healthcare access, and unequal opportunities regarding contraception and sex education)).

²⁹ *Memphis Ctr. for Reprod. Health v. Slatery*, at *31-2.

³⁰ Brief of Kentucky, et al. as Amici Curiae in Support of Defendants-Appellants, *Memphis Ctr. for Reprod. Health v. Slatery*, No. 20-5969, at 2 (6th Cir. Nov. 16, 2020), available at [www.ag.ky.gov/about/Office-Divisions/Amicus%20Briefs/2020-11-16%20Memphis%20Ctr.%20for%20Reproductive%20Health%20v.%20Slatery%20\(Ky.%20authored\).pdf](http://www.ag.ky.gov/about/Office-Divisions/Amicus%20Briefs/2020-11-16%20Memphis%20Ctr.%20for%20Reproductive%20Health%20v.%20Slatery%20(Ky.%20authored).pdf).

³¹ *Memphis Ctr. for Reprod. Health v. Slatery*, at *27 (citing Brief of Plaintiff-Appellees *Memphis Ctr. for Reprod. Health v. Slatery*, No. 20-5969, at 32-3 (6th Cir. Dec. 15, 2020)).

record of extreme activism to undermine the rights of pregnant people makes it clear that he is incapable of making fair, impartial, and unbiased judgments in this area.

For these reasons, the National Women's Law Center strongly opposes the confirmation of Mr. Chad Meredith to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Kentucky and urges the U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary to reject his nomination. If you have questions about the Law Center's opposition to Mr. Meredith's nomination, please contact me, or Alison Gill, Director of Nominations & Democracy, at agill@nwlc.org.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fatima Goss Graves". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Fatima" being the most prominent.

Fatima Goss Graves
President and CEO