



Pennsylvania Senate Bill 3

Summary: Pennsylvania Senate Bill 3, sponsored by Senator Michele Brooks, is an unconstitutional bill being pushed in defiance of robust opposition from medical experts. SB3 contains two restrictions in one bill: it criminalizes all abortion after 19 weeks, and also contains a “method ban” provision. The bill uses non-medical terminology, but it seems to seek to criminalize the use of a procedure known as dilation and evacuation (D&E), despite the fact D&E is a commonly used, medically tested, safe procedure. SB3 endangers patient health via political interference into how physicians practice medicine.

Medical experts oppose bills like SB3 because they endanger patients’ health.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), Pennsylvania Medical Society, Physicians for Reproductive Health, and many more physicians strongly oppose the provisions in this legislation because it compromises the quality of patient care. ACOG’s position is that “these restrictions represent legislative interference at its worst: doctors will be forced, by ill-advised, unscientifically motivated policy, to provide lesser care to patients.”

Lawmakers supporting SB3 have refused to listen to medical experts or women. Lawmakers supporting this bill have defiantly fast-tracked SB3 and repeatedly rejected opportunities for input from doctors, medical professionals, and Pennsylvanians who could be directly affected by this restriction.

SB3 threatens to imprison doctors for providing standard care. Doctors are ethically obligated to treat their patients with procedures that pose the least medical risk. If this law is passed, Pennsylvania doctors can be arrested for a third-degree felony and face up to seven years in prison for refusing to deprive patients with unviable pregnancies of standard care.

SB3 is blatantly unconstitutional. SB3 is unconstitutional because it criminalizes abortion before viability, criminalizes a safe and common abortion method, and has a health exception that is so narrow that it would make it illegal for doctors to provide patients medical care they need to prevent avoidable injury.

SB3 has no exceptions for fetal anomaly, rape or incest. Families often learn crucial prenatal test results after the 19th week of pregnancy. Trauma and fear can cause victims of rape and incest to delay addressing, or even understanding, pregnancy when it is the result of violence, especially for very young victims.

Politicians should not be standing in the way of physicians practicing best care on patients, or meddling with families struggling to make the best private medical decision under their unique set of circumstances.

For updates and action alerts on SB3 and other bills that affect women’s health & economic security in Pennsylvania, sign up at www.womenslawproject.org/action-alerts, like us at www.facebook.com/womenslawproj, and follow us @WomensLawProj.

Questions? Contact Tara Murtha at tmurtha@womenslawproject.org