

May, 2017

Dear Pennsylvania Legislature:

The undersigned are physicians in Pennsylvania, or physicians who refer patients to obtain care in Pennsylvania, who write to express our strong objections to Senate Bill 3. We are experts in obstetrics and gynecology and are specialists in women's health care. We are alarmed at the dangerous attempt by Pennsylvania legislators to dictate how physicians should perform a safe, common and medically proven surgical procedure, as well as to outright ban abortion 20 weeks after a woman's last menstrual period, markedly before fetal viability.

Section 3 of Senate Bill 3 could prohibit physicians from providing the best care for each patient by restricting a safe and common method of terminating pregnancies in the second trimester. In many cases, these terminations have been delayed due to current restrictions on abortion or are necessary for the patient to protect her health or future fertility. Accordingly, it represents an unwarranted intrusion into the doctor-patient relationship and could jeopardize the health of Pennsylvanian women.

Section 2 of the bill also bans pre-viability abortion at 20 weeks after a woman's last menstrual period. Once again, this bill would interfere with a physician's best medical judgment as to how to best care for patients who may be experiencing health issues during a pregnancy.

Due to this interference, this bill is opposed by two major medical groups in Pennsylvania: the Pennsylvania Section of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the Pennsylvania Medical Society.

The undersigned urge you to consider the effects of this legislation on the doctor-patient relationship. We urge you to enact laws that reflect the standard of care based on current medical evidence and protect the doctor-patient relationship—not laws that jeopardize the sanctity of that relationship and threaten women's health. We further urge you to consider that the abortion restrictions in this bill have been deemed unconstitutional in both state and federal courts. It is our view that passing this bill could lead to costly litigation that wastes state resources better spent improving the lives of Pennsylvanians—not on enacting medically unsound restrictions on patient care.

It is our strong belief that the laws in Pennsylvania should not be changed in this way. We best serve our patients—who are often struggling with difficult decisions—when we allow them to make the best decisions for their health and the well-being of their families and respect their right to the safest care possible. Doctors must be able to act according to best medical evidence and their best medical and professional judgment, without political interference. We therefore urge you to reject this harmful measure.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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