



December 11, 2017

Members of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives  
Main Capitol  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Members of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives,

The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence and our 60 member programs located across the Commonwealth are staunchly opposed to legislation that restricts a woman's reproductive rights in any way, or prevents victims of domestic and sexual violence from being able to recover and restore their autonomy.

We write today to urge you to vote "no" on Senate Bill 3. This legislation would make abortion after 19 weeks (*please note that severe fetal abnormalities are typically detected after 19 weeks*) a felony with no exception in cases of rape, incest, or fetal anomaly, including unviability.

The legislation also creates, defines and criminalizes a procedure called "dismemberment abortion." What the medical community refers to as dilation and evacuation, or "D&E." This procedure too would be banned at any stage of pregnancy.

Both of these attempts to restrict a woman's access to abortion are blatantly unconstitutional and have been ruled as such in three other states.

For 44 years, the U.S. Constitution has prohibited states from banning abortion before fetal viability. The Supreme Court has repeatedly held that viability is a matter best left to a physician's medical judgement. Obstetrician-gynecologists recognize the threshold of viability to be no earlier than the 24<sup>th</sup> week of gestation.

The narrow exception contained in the bill for situations in which a woman's health or life are at stake are too narrow and would make it illegal for doctors to administer standard medical care to women—care that may be necessary to prevent long term damage to their physical health. Again, there are no exceptions even for situations that involve rape, incest, or fetal anomaly.

Senate Bill 3 takes the complex, incredibly emotional and personal decision to terminate a pregnancy out of the hands of women and doctors and puts it in the hands of politicians.

We strongly urge you to vote no on Senate Bill 3 and ask instead that you consider advancing legislation to support healthy pregnancies, mothers and babies and supports the safety of victims of domestic and sexual violence.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Higginbotham".

Susan Higginbotham, MEd

Executive Director