

To: Members of the Pennsylvania State House of Representatives and State Senate
From: Sari Stevens, Executive Director (Sari.Stevens@pppamail.org)
Re: Allegations of Abortion Ban Cosponsorship

Sen. Michele Brooks and Rep. Kathy Rapp have recently circulated their intent to again introduce a dangerous and unconstitutional abortion ban. **Reminiscent of Kathy Rapp's 2011 Mandatory Ultrasound bill, the cosponsorship memo does not in any way reflect the reality of what the legislation would do.** Women's health, not politics, should drive important medical decisions. Below are facts about some of their allegations.

CLAIM: *The ban "would not apply in situations where an abortion is necessary to prevent the death or impairment of a major bodily function of a woman."*

TRUTH: This "exception" is exceedingly limiting, leaving no exception for rape, incest, or tragic fetal anomalies. The health exception is so extreme it would not include loss of future reproductive ability.

CLAIM: *The ban would include "dismemberment abortion."*

TRUTH: This is a made-up term, created by politicians in other states, not medical experts. Banning abortions later in pregnancy and banning a medically-proven method of abortion (D&E), interferes with doctors' ability to provide the care that's right for their patients and could actually increase the risk to a woman who needs to end a pregnancy. **In fact, the Pennsylvania Medical Society opposes this unnecessary and dangerous intrusion.**

CLAIM: *The legislation "helps protect the health and well-being of a pregnant female."*

TRUTH: This bill takes the complex decision to terminate a pregnancy out of the hands of women and doctors and puts it in the hands of politicians - **in no other field of medicine would this be acceptable. There is no way that banning a safe medical procedure and limiting women's choices in sometimes tragic situations helps protect their health, and in fact, this bill would put them more at risk.**

CLAIM: *The memo lays out several claims about fetal viability and "pain capability."*

TRUTH: The precise date of viability is inexact and may vary with each pregnancy. **Some pregnancies - no matter how many weeks - will never be viable.** The world's leading medical institutions that establish standards for reproductive health care agree that science does not support the claims about fetal reactions put forth in the cosponsorship memos.

CLAIM: *Other states have passed this law.*

TRUTH: No other state has a law this extreme on the books. States may not ban abortion prior to viability and may not impose an undue burden on women - this bill would do both. **Courts have struck down 20-week bans in Idaho, Georgia and Arizona as clearly unconstitutional.** Banning one of the safest methods of abortion is an unconstitutional undue burden - **as of today, no states have active D&E bans for this reason.**

A woman facing the decision of whether or not to terminate a pregnancy should be able to focus on making the right decision for herself and her family, not trying to navigate the dangerous obstacle course that this bill would put between patients, their medical care providers, and safe abortion care. ***It's time to stop criminalizing women's health care, interfering with the personal decisions of women, and substituting political agendas for the expertise of health care professionals.*** We ask you to see this bill for what it truly is and do not sign on.