



KANSAS NOW

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TO: Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Public Welfare
FR: Elise Higgins
Lobbyist and State Co-Coordinator, Kansas NOW
RE: House Bill 2253, Opponent Testimony

Good morning, Chairwoman Pilcher-Cook and members of the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the Kansas National Organization for Women and its more than 1,000 members across the state.

When this bill was heard in the House Federal and State Affairs on February 20th, I stood with over 40 of your community members and constituents from Wichita, El Dorado, Kansas City, Manhattan, Lawrence and Topeka in strong opposition to House Bill 2253. That same group and many of the over 670 Kansans who signed a petition against this bill would no doubt be here today, had more notice of this hearing been given. This legislation is disrespectful to women and families' decision making power, it requires doctors to break the oath of their profession, could trigger a blanket ban on all abortions, and it creates a variety of new taxes on institutions and individuals involved with abortions.

First, Kansans don't want or need more abortion regulations.

Kansas already leads the nation in number and type of abortion restrictions; we have 20 separate regulations on the procedure.¹ From parental notification to service and referral refusal laws, it is more difficult to obtain an abortion in Kansas than in any state but 3. Kansas families need good-paying jobs, strong public educations and accessible health care, not 70 pages of rehashed abortion regulations from 2012. Your constituents and community members see these bills as unwanted governmental intrusion in their personal decisionmaking, and need your leadership on more pressing issues.

Second, this legislation requires doctors to give wrong information to their patients.

¹ Mike Alberti. "Dozens of new state limits on abortion added in 2012." Remappingdebate.org. January 30, 2013.

Section 13 of House Bill 2253 contains a huge amount of medically inaccurate information that doctors should never have to repeat, including, most egregiously, language linking abortion to an increased risk of breast cancer." This information is patently false according to every reputable medical authority. From the National Cancer Institute:

"In February 2003, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) convened a workshop of over 100 of the world's leading experts who study pregnancy and breast cancer risk. Workshop participants reviewed existing population-based, clinical, and animal studies on the relationship between pregnancy and breast cancer risk, including studies of induced and spontaneous abortions. They concluded that having an abortion or miscarriage does not increase a woman's subsequent risk of developing breast cancer."

As legislators, you have a responsibility to your constituents to create policies for them based on evidence, not pseudo-science.

Third, this bill could trigger a blanket ban on abortions

New section 2a on pages 1 and 2 which describe human life as beginning at fertilization could trigger "fetal personhood," which means abortion would become illegal in all cases, no exceptions, were the United States Supreme Court to grant decision making power about abortion's legality to states. Many of the pieces of written testimony before you today deal with painful memories of a time before Roe v. Wade, when the demand for abortion was as high as it is now, but with no safe and legal recourse and tragic consequences. Granting full personhood rights to fertilized eggs is a highly unpopular public policy and has been rejected by the citizens of every state in which it has been proposed. Sneaking in this provision with a constitutional trigger does not dilute its negative effects; in addition to making all abortions illegal with no exceptions, it would also affect contraception in vitro fertilization procedures.

Fourth, the legislation threatens lives of women with mental illnesses and survivors of rape and incest

The tax provisions of the bill fail to exempt abortions in cases of rape, incest or irreversible physical impairment to a major bodily function. Additionally, post-viability abortions for suicidal women are specifically banned by section 11 a 2 on page 6.

The World Health Organization defines health as "A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease". KSA 40-2 requires parity in insurance coverage for treatment of mental health in insurance plans. The fact that this legislation delegitimizes mental health for pregnant women contradicts the spirit of existing Kansas statutes that place a high regard for mental health and puts suicidal women at grave risk.

Fifth, the bill bans important abortion prevention education in schools.

New section 4 prevents people who work in facilities that provide abortions from working at public schools. Kansas has held a long respect for the local control of school districts. This policy stands in contradiction to that value. It specifically prohibits educators from Planned

Parenthood from doing crucial educational work in public schools. This demonizes those who work for a trusted health care provider that has served approximately one in five women across the United States, and deprives young people of fact-based education that's critical to combating the need for abortions in the state.

Sixth, the bill creates intrusive new financial penalties for abortion

Sections 9 and 15 through 20 of House Bill 2253 reach into the state tax code and actually create new places for the state to profit from abortions by removing tax deductions for any item even minorly related to the procedure. Not only does this raise privacy concerns for tax and health savings account disclosure of abortion procedures, it also inappropriately inserts social engineering into our tax code. This social engineering comes at the expense of women who are pregnant as a result of incest and rape, as it provides no exception for their circumstances. Ultimately, this section creates a financial penalty on a legal healthcare procedure.

In the end, the people of Kansas neither want nor need 70 pages of anti-abortion legislation in order to live healthy, productive, prosperous lives. Kansas women and their families want policies based in scientific integrity that increase access to healthcare, create a stronger economy, and result in excellent educations. They do not want 70 pages worth of abortion politics. Please vote to not recommend House Bill 2253 favorably for passage.