

**From:** Rabbi Judah Kogen, The Hebrew Congregation  
Wichita, Kansas  
**Opponent**

**To:** Special Committee on Federal and State Affairs  
Hearing Date: January 21, 2020  
Room: 346-S

**Topic:** HCR 5019  
Written Testimony Only

I write to you as Rabbi of The Hebrew Congregation, a traditional congregation in Wichita, Kansas. I am ordained in the Conservative movement of Judaism.

I oppose HCR 5019 on the grounds that it would allow the state to prohibit members of the Jewish and other affected faith communities from making reproductive health decisions in accordance with their faith's tenets, in violation of the separation of church and state.

There is broad consensus in the Jewish community prioritizing the life of the mother over that of a fetus, making abortion permissible when the mother's life is at stake. Some Orthodox Jewish people, in addition to Conservative and Reform Jews, also consider rape, incest or the mother's physical health as other reasons for permitting the termination of a pregnancy. Thus, even under the strictest interpretation of Jewish law, there are circumstances that would justify an abortion. Therefore, HCR 5019, by removing the right to an abortion, would allow for the prohibition of reproductive health decision-making in accordance with Jewish law.

The United States was founded on the premise of religious freedom and pluralism with the separation of church and state as a core doctrine. I strongly urge you, as our elected representatives, to refrain from infringing upon citizens' rights to practice their faith by rejecting HCR 5019, thereby retaining the right of individuals to make their reproductive health decisions based upon the advice of family and health care providers and the tenets of their faith.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Judah Kogen