



KANSAS NOW

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TO: Members of the House Federal and State Affairs Committee
FR: Elise Higgins
Lobbyist and State Co-Coordinator, Kansas NOW
RE: HB 2253, Opponent Testimony

Good morning, Chairman Siegfried and members of the House Federal and State Affairs 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.

Kansas NOW strongly opposes passage of House Bill 2253 because it is disrespectful to women and families' decision making power, it requires doctors to break the oath of their profession, triggers a blanket ban on all abortions, and it creates a new tax on abortions in Kansas.

More abortion regulations neither wanted nor needed

Kansas already leads the nation in the number and type of abortion restrictions; we have 20 separate regulations on the procedure.¹ From parental notification to service 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.

Requires doctors to lie to their patients

Section 13 of House Bill 2253 contains a huge amount of medically inaccurate information that doctors should never have to repeat, including, most egregiously, the assertion that abortion increases "risk of breast cancer." This information is patently false. 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

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

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."

Triggers a blanket ban on abortion

New section 2a on page 1 and 2 triggers 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 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.

Threatens lives of women with mental illnesses and survivors of rape and incest

Section 8, page 3 of House Bill 2253 does NOT exempt abortions in cases of rape, incest or irreversible physical impairment to a major bodily function from the first 8 clauses of the legislation. Additional, Section 10 b redefines "Bodily function" as meaning physical functions only, stating "The term "bodily function" does not include mental or emotional functions." and section 11 a 2 on page 6 amends post viability abortion statute to read "No condition shall be deemed to exist if it is based on a claim or diagnosis that the woman will engage in conduct that would result in her death or in substantial and irreversible physical impairment of a major bodily function."

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.

Bans health care providers from helping at their childrens' schools

New section 4 prevents people who work in facilities that provide abortions from volunteering with public schools. Kansas has held a long respect for the local control of school districts. This policy stands in contradiction to that value. It also implies that employees of entities such as Planned Parenthood could not volunteer at their child's school. 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.

Creates intrusive new financial penalties for abortion

Sections 9 and 15 through 20 of House Bill 2253 reach into the state tax code and 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 and religious engineering into our tax code. 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. Students from Kansas State University have collected over 70 petition signatures to this effect, and the outpouring of public opposition to this legislation indicates how inappropriate and intrusive Kansans find the bill. Kansas women and their families want policies based in scientific integrity that increase access to healthcare, create a stronger economy, and result in excellent education. They do not want 70 pages worth of abortion politics. Please vote to not recommend House Bill 2253 favorably for passage.

