



Testimony in regard to Medicaid Expansion and Funding of Abortion  
Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee  
Tuesday, February 11, 2020

Chairman Suellentrop and Members of the Committee,

I am Jeanne Gawdun, Director of Government Relations with Kansans for Life.

KFL recently announced a change from its long-standing neutral position on Medicaid Expansion to opposition, until such time as the Value Them Both Amendment is approved by both the Kansas House and Senate.

Let me explain why.

The Hyde Amendment is a yearly federal budget provision that applies only to certain federal dollars, not state funds. That is how other state Medicaid programs pay for abortion. Hyde is not a federal statute, and has to be reauthorized every year. It is worth noting that every Democratic Presidential candidate has called for the repeal of the Hyde Amendment.

In 2015, KFL submitted written neutral testimony on a Medicaid expansion bill in order to inform legislators of two things: that proponent Planned Parenthood was seeking another public funding stream, and that there was extensive evidence that the organization was overbilling Medicaid programs by millions of dollars.

Beyond sharing those concerns with the committee, KFL chose not to engage further on the issue. A ban on the use of state taxpayer funded abortions had been enacted by the state legislature in 2013, and, though a legal challenge was filed, it was still in force.

In 2017, both legislative chambers approved Medicaid expansion, but did not override Governor Brownback's veto. Since the 2013 ban on state taxpayer funded abortions was intact, KFL again chose to maintain its neutral position, even during this heated legislative battle.

Since the Kansas Supreme Court's April 2019 finding of a fundamental "right" to abortion in the state Constitution, KFL has warned legislators about the ramifications, in particular the danger to current regulations on abortion, including the taxpayer funding ban. We are right to be concerned, as the court cited five cases that specifically supported taxpayer and Medicaid funded abortions, as a result of states considering abortion a fundamental right.

Elevate life.

For example, in 2018, 75% of abortion in Connecticut were funded by their state's Medicaid System known as "Huskie." The Guttmacher Institute, which has ties to Planned Parenthood, notes that 16 State Medicaid programs currently pay for abortions—9 of which are a result of court cases.

The Value Them Both Amendment was carefully crafted to address our concerns with state taxpayer funding of abortion, and declares that "the constitution of the state of Kansas does not require government funding of abortion."

Kansans for Life acknowledges that Medicaid expansion is a complicated issue, but we cannot allow the taxpayer funded abortions to drastically increase in Kansas, which is an absolute certainty due to the Supreme Court's Hodes & Nauser v. Schmidt decision.

Up until now, we have put our efforts into passing the Value Them Both Amendment, instead of being involved with Medicaid expansion. However, since the Amendment failed to pass the House by 4 votes, we must take a position in opposition to expansion until such time as the state legislature passes the Value Them Both Amendment.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jeanne Gawdun  
KFL Director of Government Relations