

May 8, 2019

Dear Representatives,

We, the undersigned reproductive health, rights, and justice organizations, write in strong opposition to any attempts to interfere with evidence-based patient care and medical practice, such as the amendment Rep. Scalise filed with the Rules Committee to amend H.R. 986. S

The potential House vote is the latest in a series of anti-choice political stunts that are clearly intended to capitalize on the false and inflammatory rhetoric surrounding abortion later in pregnancy. President Trump used his bully pulpit to spread misinformation, shame women who need abortion care later in pregnancy, and attack healthcare providers committed to providing their patients with quality, evidence-based health care when they are making the most difficult decisions. Women and families in these situations deserve our compassion and support – not our judgment and certainly not politicians telling them what to do.

Politicians engaging in these stunts want to undermine the legislative progress at the state level to protect women's health. While anti-choice politicians are doggedly pursuing any and all restrictions on reproductive health care and seeking to force people back into the dark ages, the undersigned organizations reject their efforts and stand firmly in support of the constitutional right to access safe and legal abortion care. We urge all Representatives to oppose these attempts.

Abortion practice is safe and legal; any evidence of wrongdoing can and should be handled under existing law. Instead, efforts like Rep. Scalise's amendment would dictate that providers must take actions that are contrary to a physician's medical training and clinical judgement or a parent's wishes. These efforts threaten providers with criminal and civil penalties for non-compliance. This goes well beyond the 2002 law, the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act, which the reproductive rights community did not and does not oppose. Likewise, many legislators supported the 2002 bill because it was a definitional change that was not intended to change anything about the medical practice of labor, delivery or abortion. By contrast, the true goals of the Scalise amendment and related efforts are to mislead and deceive the public with outrageous accusations, to interfere with medical care, and to intimidate doctors out of practice with threats of criminal penalties. Consequently, medical organizations such as the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists oppose this legislation.

We reject these attacks that disproportionately harm women, low-income individuals, communities of color, immigrants, LGBTQ individuals, and other marginalized people.

In recent years, we have witnessed an unprecedented onslaught of attacks on reproductive health. These attacks clearly demonstrate the way extremists have usurped the political system to advance views opposed by most Americans. Seven in 10 Americans consistently say they believe that abortion care should be legal. They believe that individuals should make the decisions about if, when, how, and with whom they become parents — not politicians. Bills that restrict access to comprehensive reproductive health care are part of an extreme agenda that is out of step with the priorities of American women and families.

Abortion has been and will always be a part of women's lives. And woman's health, not politics, should inform important medical decisions. This deeply personal decision should always be made by the person seeking an abortion in consultation with her health care provider, family, and other individuals she trusts, not politicians. Politicians are not medical experts and have no place in the exam room interfering with the provision of compassionate, evidence-based care.

We call on Representatives to work toward advancing policies that actually help women and families rather than restricting access to the health care they need and deserve. Women — not politicians — are best qualified to make decisions about their own health.

Sincerely,

Advocates for Youth

American Civil Liberties Union

American Humanist Association

Catholics for Choice

Center for American Progress

Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)

Center for Reproductive Rights

Feminist Majority

If/When/How: Lawyering for Reproductive Justice

In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda

NARAL Pro-Choice America

National Abortion Federation

National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)

National Council of Jewish Women

National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association

National Health Law Program

National Institute for Reproductive Health (NIRH)  
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health  
National Network of Abortion Funds  
National Organization for Women  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
National Women's Health Network  
National Women's Law Center  
People For the American Way  
Physicians for Reproductive Health  
Planned Parenthood Federation of America  
Population Connection Action Fund  
Population Institute  
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS)  
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity