

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HB 1171

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & CIVIL JURISPRUDENCE

Hearing Date: March 31, 2021 8:00 AM

Miranda Whited

Self; student

Pflugerville, TX

This bill has great potential to harm Texas teens. It threatens the confidential of judicial bypass. In 2014, Alabama legislators tried to pass a similar bill and a federal court found it unconstitutional. It is irresponsible to move this bill forward any further. Texas youth deserve comprehensive access to healthcare, which this bill threatens.

maria rodriguez

self

houston, TX

get your hands out of our uterus

fred campbell, MD

UT Health San Antonio

SAN ANTONIO, TX

- As a physician and medical school faculty member, I am convinced that HB 1171 threatens the confidential of judicial bypass. It risks the safety of teens seeking abortion care and is a thinly-veiled attempt to jeopardize a woman's legal right to abortion. It is anti-child and heartless.

G. Sealy Massingill, MD

Self/physician

Fort Worth, TX

This bill is unconstitutional and places vulnerable young people in harm's way. Minors seeking a judicial bypass have a Constitutional guarantee of a confidential and expeditious judicial bypass process. Appointing an attorney ad litem for a fetus is in direct violation of both of these guarantees. Allowing the court to appoint an attorney ad litem for the fetus turns what is already an incredibly onerous procedure into an adversarial one. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth. Young people of color, immigrant youth, LGBTQ+ youth, young people in foster care, and young people experiencing homelessness already face incredibly difficult and systemic burdens as they seek medical care. They are also the youth most likely to seek a judicial bypass. Parental involvement laws delay access to healthcare for young people without having any clear impact on lowering abortion rates or encouraging minors to talk to their parents about their abortions. Young people in Texas need medically accurate sex education, access to reproductive health services including contraception and abortion, and the right to consent to their own care.

Victoria Avelar

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Self

Frisco, TX

I support protecting the child in the womb and supporting the mother as well. Both are equally human.

Elsa Irby

self

San Antonio, TX

My name is Elsa Irby and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people.

I believe that minors, like everyone else, have the same autonomous rights over their body and choices. There is absolutely no reason why they can't have the freedom to make their own choices regarding their life and body.

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth. Just because they're young doesn't mean we should put them in these problematic situations.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Lauren Castanola

Self

San Antonio, TX

My name is Lauren and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people.

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youths.

States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171!

Nikhil Boga

Self

Lewisville, TX

I am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

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Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

The judicial bypass process is intended to ensure that states do not create a parental veto to abortion access for young people under 18, which would be unconstitutional under the United States Supreme Court Case, *Belotti v. Baird*, 443 U.S. 622 (1979). The inquiry in a bypass case is narrowly tailored to whether the applicant is mature and informed enough to make this decision for themselves or whether notification and an attempt to get consent would not be in the applicant's best interest. There are no other factors for the court to consider, and so it is outside the scope of these hearings to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus. Furthermore, no competent, ethical attorney would consent to this appointment.

Appointing an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass hearing would have the effect of turning these hearings into adversarial procedures and further creates an undue burden on young people's access to abortion care.

Young people need to have access to health care, information, and resources when they are faced with an important life decision – not barriers and delays. Instead of laws that hurt our families, we should invest in solutions that work for every young person, family, and community. A young person seeking an abortion needs compassionate support and access to health care, information, and services; not a trial-like adjudication. The judicial bypass process is onerous, can be traumatic for a young person, and causes additional and unnecessary delays. HB 1171 will only intensify these barriers.

For these reasons, I strongly oppose House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration.

Edward Larroca

Me

Dallas, TX

This bill threatens the confidentiality of judicial bypass, risks the safety of teens seeking abortion care, and violates young people's constitutional right to a confidential, expeditious bypass process. Please stop wasting legislative sessions and taxpayer dollars on bills that have already been deemed unconstitutional in federal court after they were enacted by other states.

Jillian Bowen

self, unemployed

Leander, TX

My name is Jillian and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people.

The youth should have access to abortions because some aren't ready to have children or can't afford it. They shouldn't be denied of the right because of age or fhsir situation.

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth.

Young people need confidential abortion care because the decision to get an abortion is hard enough. Having someone that you don't know and aren't comfortable with learning about your situation would be extremely uncomfortable in an already

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uncomfortable situation.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Samantha Montgomery

Self- allied health professional

Houston, TX

I am writing to oppose HB1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to a fetus in the judicial bypass hearings.

Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to those barriers.

The judicial bypass process is intended to ensure that states do not create a parental veto to abortion access for young people under 18, which would be unconstitutional under the United States Supreme Court case, *Belotti v Baird*, 433 US 622 (1979). The inquiry in a bypass case is narrowly tailored to whether the applicant is mature and informed enough to make this decision for themselves or whether notification and an attempt to get consent would not be in the applicants best interest. There are no other factors for the court to consider, and so it is outside the scope of these hearings to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem to the fetus. Furthermore, no competent, ethical attorney would consent to this appointment.

Appointing an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass hearing would have the effect of turning these hearings into adversarial procedures and further creates an undue burden on young peoples access to abortion care.

Young people need to have access to health care, information, and resources when they are faced with an important life decision- not barriers and delays. Instead of laws that hurt our families, we should invest in solutions that work for every young person, family, and community. A young person seeking an abortion needs compassionate support and access to healthcare, information and services, not a trial like adjudication. The judicial bypass process is onerous, can be traumatic for a young person, and causes additional and unnecessary delays. HB1171 will only intensify these barriers.

Perhaps a better use of the time it took to write and review this ridiculous and unconstitutional house bill would be to work on solutions and resources that would prevent unwanted pregnancies, like creating comprehensive sex education programs. Or working on solutions to provide more assistance for those young people who elect to continue pregnancies but face significant challenges in accessing prenatal care, affordable childcare, among the many other necessities a person would need to raise a child.

For these reasons, I strongly oppose HB1171.

Thank you for your consideration.

Julie Sorrels

Self

Garland, TX

My name is Julie Sorrels and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people.

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a

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result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Kari White
self/professor
Austin, TX

Committee Members:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

Parental involvement laws for minor seeking abortion and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. As a public health researcher, I have also found that these restrictions compromise young people's ability to obtain quality abortion care. The judicial bypass process is already onerous, can be traumatic for a young person, and causes additional and unnecessary delays. HB 1171 will only intensify these barriers.

The judicial bypass process is intended to ensure that states do not create a parental veto to abortion access for young people under 18, which would be unconstitutional under the 1979 United States Supreme Court Case, *Belotti v. Baird*, 443 U.S. 622. In a bypass case, the judge can only consider whether the applicant is mature and informed enough to make this decision for themselves or whether notification and an attempt to get consent would not be in the applicant's best interest. There are no other factors for the court to consider, and so it is outside the scope of these hearings to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus.

Appointing an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass hearing would have the effect of turning these hearings into adversarial procedures and further creates an undue burden on young people's access to abortion care. Moreover, appointing a guardian ad litem for the fetus has been found to be unconstitutional in other states that have proposed such legislation.

Young people need to have access to health care, information, and resources when they are faced with an important life decision, like what to do about an unplanned pregnancy – not barriers and delays. And certainly not a trial-like adjudication of a well-thought out decision to get an abortion.

For these reasons, I strongly oppose House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kari White

May Nguyen
self, physician
Houston, TX

I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people.

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Teens need access to safe, comprehensive health care, including contraception, prenatal, and abortion care. They have the right to self-determination. As a family physician, I believe young people should have access to the health care they need and the right to make decisions about pregnancy for themselves.

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth.

Young people need to have confidential health care. They have the right to determine their future and access safe, legal, high quality health care.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Leslie Lopez

Self, Non-Profit worker

Dallas, TX

My name is Leslie L. and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people.

I believe every Texan, regardless of age, has the right to make decisions over their own body including but not limited to abortion. As someone who has long been passionate about expanding abortion access in Texas, I am aware of the current barriers people face in trying to receive the abortion care they need, and know that HB 1171 simply seeks to shame and further stigmatize abortion care, and put young people in danger.

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth.

Young people deserve confidential abortion care because obtaining parental consent is simply not a safe reality for everyone. Not to mention the irony of requiring young people to need permission from a parent or guardian for a simply health care procedure, but not to become parents. HB 1171 is not about protecting anyone, it is about restricting the rights of young people and putting hurdles in the way of necessary care - hurdles that may or may not stop people from getting the abortion care they need, one way or another,

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Elissa Serapio, Dr.

Self, Physician

McAllen, TX

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As an obstetrician-gynecologist who cares for young patients in South Texas, I am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

Unplanned and unwanted and complicated pregnancies happen: women's health physicians see these patients facing challenging situations every day. Sometimes these young patients decide to continue the pregnancy and sometimes they decide that in their own best interest – and in the best interest of their current and future family and life – they need to have an abortion.

A young patient in this tough situation needs compassionate care and support. HB 1171 results in the exact opposite. Already, the forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers. On behalf of my patients, I urge you to oppose this legislation, which will traumatize vulnerable young people in Texas and result in delays in care.

The judicial bypass process is intended to ensure that states do not create a parental veto to abortion access for young people under 18, which would be unconstitutional under the United States Supreme Court Case, *Belotti v. Baird*, 443 U.S. 622 (1979). The inquiry in a bypass case is narrowly tailored to whether the applicant is mature and informed enough to make this decision for themselves or whether notification and an attempt to get consent would not be in the applicant's best interest. There are no other factors for the court to consider, and so it is outside the scope of these hearings to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus. Furthermore, I believe, with my medical experience and knowledge of what these young people experience, that it would directly cause them harm.

I strongly oppose House Bill 1171. It is absolutely not in the best interest of young people in Texas.

Thank you for your consideration.

Dr. Elissa Serapio
McAllen, Texas

Amanda Howard

Self

Houston, TX

My name is Amanda and I am writing today to express my deep opposition to HB 1171. HB 1171 threatens the confidentiality of judicial bypass. It risks the safety of teens seeking abortion care. A similar bill was passed in Alabama in 2014 and a federal court found it unconstitutional. HB 1171 violates young people's Constitutional right to a confidential, expeditious bypass process. HB 1171 makes the judicial bypass process even more stigmatizing and burdensome for Texas teens.

Adrienne Ortega

Self

DENTON, TX

HB 1171 threatens the confidentiality of judicial bypass. It risks the safety of teens seeking abortion care. This is an unnecessary restriction that is an attempt to delay and stigmatize abortion care. Most young people already choose to involve a parent or guardian in their abortion decision, adding procedural burdens only serves to delay care for those that cannot involve a parent.

Virginia Parks

self

HOUSTON, TX

I'm writing in opposition to HV 1171. I counsel patients at an abortion clinic including many young women that are seeking a judicial bypass in lieu of parental consent. Every single time, I ask if there is any way they can get a parent to give consent. Some summon the courage to tell a parent and return with them. For many however, that is simply not an option. Patients have reported

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that they feared for their safety or eviction from the family home. I've heard of parents unable to provide consent because they are incarcerated or deported. Seeking an abortion is an intimidating process for many already. Asking a judge for permission is even more so. It is process that is taken seriously by all.

I wish that representatives seeking to curb abortion would listen to those of us on the frontlines. Pass legislation that mandates medically accurate sex education for Texas youth. Offer them birth control as well. Ensure access to affordable birth control for everyone seeking it. Invest in childcare and pre-K education opportunities throughout Texas. Offer supportive services that actually help working families. These actions would reduce abortions significantly more than unconstitutional and mean-spirited bills like HB 1171.

Paula Allen, Dr.

Self

Lakeway, TX

The most sacred of all human rights is control over one's own body. For women, this right has historically been denied. The intention by this bill to deny women, no matter how young, discretionary legal and medical status is nothing less than enslavement.

Ghazaleh Moayedi, Dr.

Pegasus Health Justice Center

Dallas, TX

As an OB/GYN physician, mother, and teacher I OPPOSE this bill. HB 1171 is dangerous for teenagers and puts vulnerable teens at risk. I provide healthcare for young adults seeking judicial bypass and this bill threatens the confidentiality of the Judicial Bypass system, putting the people I care for at risk. Teens who seek Judicial Bypass do so for complex social reasons - they need to be protected, not put at risk by legislation like this. This bill is also unconstitutional, a similar bill was passed in Alabama in 2014 and a federal court found it unconstitutional. HB 1171 violates young people's Constitutional right to a confidential, expeditious bypass process. HB 1171 also makes the judicial bypass process even more stigmatizing and burdensome for Texas teens - it is already hard enough for teens to access abortion care when they need it. This bill aims to further stigmatize the most vulnerable teens in our communities.

Genesis Alfaro

Self

Dallas, TX

My name is genesis Alfaro and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people.

OUR BODIES OUR CHOICE

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth.

YOU ARE RUINING LOTS OF FUTURES

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Hunter Nasato

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Self/ domestic violence victims advocate

Lubbock, TX

My name is Hunter Nasato and I am writing to oppose house bill 1171, Which would appoint a guardian ad litem or attorney ad litem to a fetus in judicial bypass proceedings. HB 1171 would directly violate the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and further traumatize teens facing already adverse experiences.

The teens that require a judicial bypass in order to terminate a pregnancy experience an extreme amount of stress, shame and fear. They fear being kicked out of their homes, stigmatized by their peers and shamed by their communities. Add to that, terrified that they may have to carry a pregnancy against their will and disrupt their education or extra-curricular activities. I could not imagine the strength it takes to overcome that. Confidentiality is required of judicial bypass hearings for the safety of the teen, and introducing an additional person to advocate against these minors would violate that requirement.

While this conflict with confidentiality is egregious, the trauma and intimidation a teen would experience in this case is even more wicked. The health and well-being of these teens should be our top priority. Introducing an adversary as an additional barrier to obtaining a judicial bypass will only introduce the idea that these teens are doing something wrong, when in fact they are not.

The effects of this bill would be detrimental to the health and well-being of teens across the state of Texas. For this reason, I oppose HB 1171. Thank you.

Nina Zamarripa

Self

Austin, TX

My name is Nina Zamarripa and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people.

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Jamie Green

self - educator

MONTAGUE, TX

My name is Jamie and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people.

In my experience as an educator, I have watched the struggle of young people that are pregnant or have children, and I have unfortunately witnessed these scenarios as a result of abuse, rape, incest, or coercion, often (if not always) without the necessary sex education to understand prevention methods, if they were even available for use. While adults may be a guidance to youth in

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these situations, it is a fact that these youths will not see the same life outcomes as youths who are without children.

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions choose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth.

As a "red state" that does not mandate sex education, we are looking at purity culture changing the lives of youth by subjecting them to guilt and shame from something that they did not even know was happening to them. Guilt and shame does not have to carry through in the evidence of an unwanted pregnancy.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Danna Ghafir

Self

Sugar Land, TX

I, Danna Ghafir, am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

The judicial bypass process is intended to ensure that states do not create a parental veto to abortion access for young people under 18, which would be unconstitutional under the United States Supreme Court Case, *Belotti v. Baird*, 443 U.S. 622 (1979). The inquiry in a bypass case is narrowly tailored to whether the applicant is mature and informed enough to make this decision for themselves or whether notification and an attempt to get consent would not be in the applicant's best interest. There are no other factors for the court to consider, and so it is outside the scope of these hearings to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus. Furthermore, no competent, ethical attorney would consent to this appointment.

Appointing an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass hearing would have the effect of turning these hearings into adversarial procedures and further creates an undue burden on young people's access to abortion care.

Young people need to have access to health care, information, and resources when they are faced with an important life decision – not barriers and delays. Instead of laws that hurt our families, we should invest in solutions that work for every young person, family, and community. A young person seeking an abortion needs compassionate support and access to health care, information, and services; not a trial-like adjudication. The judicial bypass process is onerous, can be traumatic for a young person, and causes additional and unnecessary delays. HB 1171 will only intensify these barriers.

For these reasons I strongly oppose House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lauren Turek, Dr.

Self, Historian

SAN ANTONIO, TX

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I am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings. This bill is unconstitutional and places vulnerable young people in harm's way. This is proposed legislation is nothing more than an attempt to delay and stigmatize abortion care.

Forced parental involvement laws and judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

The judicial bypass process is intended to insure that states do not create a parental veto to abortion access for people under 18, which would be unconstitutional under U.S. Supreme Court case *Belotti v. Baird*, 443 U.S. 622 (1979). The inquiry in a bypass case is narrowly tailored to whether the applicant is mature and informed enough to get consent and would not be in the applicant's best interest. There are no other factors for the court to consider, so it is outside the scope of these hearings to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus. Furthermore, no competent, ethical attorney would consent to this appointment.

Appointing an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass hearing would have the effect of turning these hearings into adversarial procedures and would create an undue burden on young people's access to abortion care.

Young people should have access to health care, information, and resources when they are faced with an important life decision—they should not face barriers and delays because of the personal religious beliefs and ideology of their legislators. Instead of laws that hurt our families, we should invest in solutions that work for every young person, family, and community. A young person seeking an abortion needs compassionate support and access to health care, information, and services, not a trial-like adjudication. The judicial bypass process is onerous, can be traumatic for a young person, and causes additional and unnecessary delays. HB 1171 will only intensify these barriers.

For these reasons, I strongly oppose House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration.

Nan Kirkpatrick

myself

Dallas, TX

I am writing to oppose HB 1171, a bill that would allow judges to appoint guardian ad litem or attorney ad litem for fetuses in judicial bypass proceedings. This bill is an unconstitutional undue burden on the right of a minor to access confidential abortion care. This bill would also make the judicial bypass process more burdensome and traumatizing for teens seeking to exercise their reproductive right to an abortion. I believe that young people deserve the ability to make decisions for their own bodies and futures, and HB 1171 is yet one more barrier designed to make this feel impossible for teens. When a teen is facing an unwanted pregnancy, the last thing they need is what is essentially a manipulative tactic designed to shame and stigmatize their decision making. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding, creating an opening for judges to insert their personal beliefs into what is supposed to be a non-adversarial proceeding, and harms the health and safety of young people in Texas. Again I urge you to oppose HB 1171.

Therin Geeslin

People's Community Clinic

Austin, TX

This bill is unconstitutional and places vulnerable young people in harm's way.

? Minors seeking a judicial bypass have a Constitutional guarantee of a confidential and expeditious judicial bypass process. Appointing an attorney ad litem for a fetus is in direct violation of both of these guarantees.

? Allowing the court to appoint an attorney ad litem for the fetus turns what is already an incredibly onerous procedure into an adversarial one.

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Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth.
? Young people of color, immigrant youth, LGBTQ+ youth, young people in foster care, and young people experiencing homelessness already face incredibly difficult and systemic burdens as they seek medical care. They are also the youth most likely to seek a judicial bypass.

This is an attempt to delay and stigmatize abortion care.

? Parental involvement laws delay access to healthcare for young people without having any clear impact on lowering abortion rates or encouraging minors to talk to their parents about their abortions.

? Young people in Texas need medically accurate sex education, access to reproductive health services including contraception and abortion, and the right to consent to their own care.

? Most young people already choose to involve a parent or guardian in their abortion decision, adding procedural burdens only serves to delay care for those that cannot involve a parent.

Theo Hernandez

self

Austin, TX

let minors decide what happens to their body. a fetus is a not a person. for once prioritize existing people and not fetuses. this is disgusting.

Matthew Seaton

Self

Austin, TX

My name is Matthew Seaton and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people.

It is incredibly important to ensure that every mother is given the right to be the sole overseer of her body

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth.

It is imperative that young adults be given the opportunity to have a say in their futures and protect their bodily rights.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Amy Garcia

Self

richardson, TX

This blatantly risks the safety of teens seeking abortion care. A similar bill was passed in Alabama in 2014 and a federal court found it unconstitutional. It also violates young people's Constitutional right to a confidential, expeditious bypass process. It would make the judicial bypass process even more stigmatizing and burdensome for Texas teens.

Heather Allison

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Self - Policy Associate for Jane's Due Process and Avow

Austin, TX

My name is Heather Allison, and I am writing to oppose HB 1171, which would allow a court to appoint an attorney ad litem for a fetus during a judicial bypass proceeding. This law is not only unconstitutional, it prevents Texas' most vulnerable youth at risk from seeking the essential medical care they need.

All Texans have a fundamental right to bodily autonomy, which includes the right to get an abortion. Texas teens who wish to get an abortion without their parents' consent have a constitutional guarantee to an anonymous, expeditious process that allows them to prove that they are mature and informed enough to make their own health care decisions, or that continuing with the pregnancy is not in their best interest. *Bellotti v. Baird*, 443 U.S. 622 (1979). Allowing a court to appoint an attorney for the fetus in these hearings violates both the guarantee of confidentiality and the guarantee of an expeditious bypass - this has already been decided by a federal judge. *Reproductive Health Services v. Marshall*, 268 F.Supp.3d 1261 (M.D. Ala. 2017). Additionally, appointing a guardian ad litem for a fetus is completely irrelevant to the bypass inquiry, which is narrowly tailored to determine ONLY if the minor is (1) mature and informed enough to make her decision, OR (2) continuing with the pregnancy would not be in her best interest. Neither of these inquiries would be better served by having an attorney represent the interests of the fetus, because that is completely outside the scope of the proceeding. This legislation serves only to delay the judicial bypass process and add even more barriers to an already incredibly difficult and emotionally taxing process.

This legislation will also have the effect of harming Texas' most vulnerable youth. Teens who are able to involve their parents in their abortion decisions usually choose to do so; those who don't are often at risk for emotional and physical abuse or being kicked out of their homes. Young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, LGBTQ+ youth, and young people of color are the most likely to seek a judicial bypass, and are already disproportionately affected by parental bypass laws. Texas should be protecting these teens, especially after the winter storm and as we still navigate the COVID-19 pandemic. Teens seeking essential medical services deserve protection and compassionate, comprehensive care and should be empowered to exercise their right to bodily autonomy when it comes to sexual and reproductive health. Instead, Texas legislators continue to enact barriers to services and put these youth even more at risk.

HB 1171, is unconstitutional, unnecessary, unethical, and irrelevant. For these reasons, I strongly oppose this legislation and urge Texas legislators to vote against this deeply harmful bill.

Hannah Thalenberg

Self, abortion funder

Houston, TX

My name is Hannah Thalenberg, and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. Aside from the inanity of the notion that an embryo or fetus should have any legal standing and the fact that our state apparently didn't have enough money to make sure children didn't freeze to death during last month's winter storm, this is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people.

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes or otherwise harmed for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth. Some of these young people are already parents.

I have driven young people to their judicial bypass court dates and to their abortion appointments. If I feel uncomfortable even walking into a court building, I can't begin to imagine how these brave and bright teenagers must feel having their futures decided by a judge. In smaller counties than where I live, there is also the concern that being in a tight-knit community might mean that someone at the courthouse or even the judge might know the minor's family. Adding an attorney for the cluster of cells in their uterus into this scenario and drawing out the judicial bypass process would only further traumatize and endanger the young person fighting to build the life they want for themselves.

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The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process, and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Ariana Camara

Self

Austin, TX

The current judicial bypass process is already a considerable barrier to young people seeking abortion care. As a law student, I assist young Texans in this endeavor and know that the reason behind a judicial bypass is often unimaginable: fear of homelessness, fear of abuse, nonexistent parents or guardians, and more. To turn this process adversarial is to further traumatize a young person in an already traumatic situation. Going before a judge to request permission is terrifying for most young people, and most adults unfamiliar with the legal system. Most of the young Texans I assist, when asked what their questions or concerns are about the process, immediately ask what going to court is like, express anxiety over knowing what to say and how to say it in front of others, and often imagine an adversarial court process. This bill makes their greatest fears a reality. It forces young people not only to request permission but to argue as though in litigation for their ability to seek healthcare and continue pursuing their aspirations in life.

This bill is an undue burden on Texas youth. This bill creates unnecessary trauma for teens already in a difficult situation. Texas often talks of protecting young people, but in this instance, if this bill becomes law, young people will need protection from the cruelty of a litigation process created by Texas. Please do not further this bill.

Sarah Gonzales

IEEE - Texas State University Chapter

Leander, TX

My name is Sarah Gonzales and I strongly oppose the House Bill 1171. Appointing an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus is harmful to the youth needing agency over their special circumstances that need to be private.

Parents that are able to be involved, often are. But there are special circumstances with marginalized youth where this is not possible. The risks include: getting kicked out of their home, parents who do not have their child's best interest, forcing a child to have an unwanted pregnancy, cases of abuse.

Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth.

Privacy allows young people to overcome the barriers they are especially experiencing in order to make quick decisions concerning an already traumatic and difficult situation.

HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Sandra Garcia

Self

El Paso, TX

This is an attack on pregnant minors who already have trouble accessing abortions due to restrictions already in place in the state

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of TX. It is abhorrent that anybody would choose to appoint an attorney to a fetus. It is abhorrent that you would make girls have a court proceeding for a medical procedure that they are (and should always be) within their rights to access. There are a multitude of reasons why people choose to get an abortion. None of them are the business of the Texas government. Women and girls should be able to access abortion as easily as any other routine medical care. Making minors go through all these hoops to access an abortion only seeks to control them and their bodily autonomy. This bill is unconstitutional and it actively hurts pregnant minors. Please vote no on this egregious abuse of power by TX state legislators.

Sage Coram

Self - legal assistant

Houston, TX

I am writing to strongly oppose HB 1171. This legislation would interfere in young people's rights to a confidential and expeditious judicial bypass proceeding, a process that is already incredibly burdensome. This is not the kind of legislation we need to protect the health and wellbeing of Texas youth -- I urge you to oppose HB 1171.

Kylie Norris

Self, Insurance Underwriting Support

Austin, TX

My name is Kylie and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people. I believe minors seeking abortions should be able to access safe, confidential treatment, and that confidentiality is their right. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Blythe Nguyen

Self

Houston, TX

My name is Blythe Nguyen and I am contacting you to express my opposition to House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people. My sister and my best friend have both had abortions. They weren't ready to bring children in this world and not give them the life they deserve.

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Heiko Stang

Self

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Wimberley, TX

I OPPOSE House Bill 1171. Young Texans have enough trauma going through a system that discounts and shames their autonomy and personhood. The additional requirement to have a lawyer appointed for a potential being introduces an unwarranted and unnecessary burden into an already confusing and stressful situation. Let this decision remain as private as possible. House Bill 1171 should not pass!

Ariana Rodriguez

Self-Marketing

San Antonio, TX

My name is Ariana and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in a judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people.

As a volunteer who works with youth who need abortions, the state of Texas has failed them. Texas teens do not receive adequate knowledge or access to prevent pregnancies. Working with young people has taught me how important it is that they have all options available to them, including abortion access.

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth.

Young people need confidential care because care should always be private. No one is expected to disclose their need for care, and neither should young people.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Jessica Wickersham

Self, civil servant

Lubbock, TX

My name is Jessica Wickersham and I oppose HB1171, which would complicate proceedings in which a minor seeking an abortion does not or cannot involve their parents or guardians for fear of their safety and or bodily autonomy. These children are in the minority of children who are seeking abortion, as most children who need an abortion do in fact have parental guidance. The kids who cannot involve their parents do so for reasons such as being disowned or expelled from the family home for being pregnant, or have parents who would require them to carry the fetus to term if they fell pregnant while under the age of 18. Children who fall pregnant in their tweens or teens are often at risk of high risk pregnancy, discontinuation of their education, and lifelong economic, career and personal hardship. Their infant is as such more likely to be placed in the foster system, where neglect, abuse and child poverty is all too common, or to be raised in a single parent household.

There is no legitimate reason for a fetus to be appointed it's own lawyer. This measure would serve to force minors who fall pregnant accidentally or who face risks to their health, education, economic security and familiar relationships from said pregnancy, to carry the fetus to term against their wishes and or their ability to raise said fetus after it is carried to term and delivered.

Also, this bill is a direct copy of an Alabama bill that was ruled unconstitutional by the US Supreme Court.

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Texas republican representatives need to stop wasting time and resources by creating and passing bills they know full well will be challenged and knocked down by the courts. Their extremist and single minded zeal in trying to harm and control women and girls is abhorrent and betrays the public trust the American people have placed in their representatives and institutions. Shame on the Texas GOP and shame on this disgusting bill.

Susan Metcalfe

Self - retired

Wimberley, TX

I oppose House Bill 1171. This is a totally unnecessary action that places additional trauma on young Texans going through a system that discounts and shames their autonomy and personhood (which all living citizens have a right to.) It also elevates an unborn fetus to a level of 'personhood' that is false. The additional requirement to have a lawyer appointed for a potential being introduces an unwarranted and unnecessary burden into an already confusing and stressful situation. Let this decision remain as private as possible. House Bill 1171 should not pass!

Sarah Lopez

Self

Austin, TX

My name is Sarah Lopez and I'm writing to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in a judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people.

As someone who has had an abortion in Texas and helps Texans access abortion every single day, I know firsthand the many ways abortion restrictions harm those most vulnerable in our communities. This type of harsh legislation wouldn't reduce the number of abortions young people have, it would only force them to travel out of state to get the care they need in order to be free from shame. Regardless of anyone's "personal feelings" around abortion, Texas has a robust network of advocates and community members that will always help people get the care they need no matter the obstacles.

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth.

Teens deserve to be trusted and affirmed in every way, especially in ways that pertain to their bodily autonomy. HB 1171 only seeks to further traumatize young people who are trying to make a decision that's best for them. Rather than wasting time and resources on these kinds of harsh measures, we should instead focus on issues that would enrich young people's lives, such as providing opportunities for education, access to gender-affirming healthcare, comprehensive sex-ed, and so much more.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Heidi Summers

self

Austin, TX

HB 1171 threatens the confidential of judicial bypass. It risks the safety of teens seeking abortion care.

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A similar bill was passed in Alabama in 2014 and a federal court found it unconstitutional. HB 1171 violates young people's Constitutional right to a confidential, expeditious bypass process.

HB 1171 makes the judicial bypass process even more stigmatizing and burdensome for Texas teens.

This bill in its entirety will have negative ramifications for the mental and physical health of teens seeking abortion care.

Stop HB 1171 from encroaching on an individual's right to a safe abortion.

Rochelle Garza

ACLU of Texas

Brownsville, TX

I respectfully submit this testimony on behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union of Texas, and its 200,000 members and supporters around the state, to express our opposition to HB 1171, which would require the appointment of an attorney ad litem (“AAL”) or guardian ad litem (“GAL”) to the unborn fetus of a minor seeking a judicial bypass from a Texas state court. This bill would harm minors and put them on trial in a proceeding meant to protect them.

The judicial bypass process, empowers a pregnant, unemancipated minor to seek a court order to proceed with their abortion decision without the knowledge or consent of their parent or legal guardian. This is a right that is required by the United States Constitution.

The Supreme Court has held that states may not pass restrictions on abortion that create an “undue burden” on anyone’s ability to access it. *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, 505 U.S. 833 (1992). However, having an attorney represent a fetus at a judicial bypass proceeding would create exactly that type of unconstitutional burden. The Supreme Court made clear in *Bellotti v. Baird*, 443 U.S. 622 (1979), that: “Every minor must have the opportunity—if she so desires—to go directly to a court without first consulting or notifying her parents. If she satisfies the court that she is mature and well enough informed to make intelligently the abortion decision on her own, the court must authorize her to act without parental consultation or consent.”

The interest that controls in a judicial bypass proceeding is the interest of the person who needs the abortion, and no one else’s. Alabama tried to pass a law similar to HB 1171, which would have allowed courts to appoint GALs to represent fetuses. An Alabama federal court found that the law was unconstitutional, and an important part of its reasoning was that the law permitted someone other than the minor to advocate in the proceeding. See *Reproductive Health Services v. Marshall*, 268 F. Supp. 3d 1261 (M.D. Ala. 2017).

HB 1171 puts minors on trial by introducing an adversarial party to the proceedings through appointing an ad litem for the fetus. The fetus would be presumed to have ascertainable interests that ad litem must obtain pursuant to Section 107 of the Texas Family Code. As such, ad litem would have to jeopardize these confidential proceedings by interviewing the pregnant minor’s parents or legal guardians and/or cross-examine the pregnant minor during the proceeding to prove up their fetal client’s interests for the court.

HB 1171 does nothing to further protect pregnant minors seeking a judicial bypass in our state. Instead, the proposed changes would impose an unconstitutional restriction on a minor’s right to abortion by making the judicial bypass proceeding adversarial by appointing ad litem to represent their fetuses. Because of these reasons, we urge you not to pass this bill.

Sincerely,

Rochelle M. Garza
Staff Attorney
ACLU of TX

Katherine Johnson

n/a

Driftwood, TX

This legislation is meant to shame minors considering abortion, while also trying to run out the clock on whether the patient can

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receive an abortion. This is archaic and harmful. Do better. If you don't think a minor can choose for themselves DON'T MAKE THEM BECOME A PARENT

Jessica Johnson

Self

Austin, TX

My name is Jessica Johnson and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people.

As an attorney who has helped a youth through this process, adding additional egregious requirements to an already emotionally taxing process is unnecessary and inhumane. HB 1171 violates young people's Constitutional right to a confidential, expeditious bypass process. Additionally, a similar bill was found unconstitutional by a federal court. As a property owner, I fundamentally disagree with my tax dollars going towards defense of an unconstitutional bill. Further, this bill seems to confer personhood to fetuses which creates a host of odd legal inconsistencies that go against decades of legal canon.

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Erin Simmons

Self

Cedar Park, TX

As a TX resident I oppose this bill.

samantha castro

self, student

schertz, TX

My name is Samantha Castro and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people.

Abortion access is vital for every person and every person deserves access to it. Without this access, the government is telling these people seeking reproductive help that they aren't worthy of making decisions themselves and are lowering their worth as a person.

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth.

Youth deserve the same amount of confidentiality as any person. The government should not have the right to tear apart their life by putting the youth at risk by divulging confidential information.

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The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Ana Rodriguez

Self

Houston, TX

My name is Ana Rodriguez and I urge the committee to vote against HB 1171, a dangerous bill that harms young people in Texas and adds an additional barrier in their ability to access healthcare.

Everyone should be able to safely access abortion care, including young people. Already, Texas makes it difficult for young people to access the full spectrum of reproductive healthcare by requiring parental consent for abortion and birth control. While the majority of young people involve a parent in reproductive healthcare decisions if it is safe to do so, other young people risk getting kicked out of their homes or would be forced to continue a pregnancy against their will. The judicial bypass process is one way youth can navigate the consent requirement to access abortion care, but this is another barrier that makes young people feel criminalized, not empowered.

HB 1171 makes the judicial bypass process even more stigmatizing and burdensome for young people in Texas. Young people should not be made to feel criminalized for seeking basic medical care. Further, HB 1171 threatens young people's confidentiality and would further risk young people's safety.

Finally, HB 1171 violates young people's constitutional right to a confidential, expeditious bypass process. A similar bill passed in Alabama in 2014 was found to be unconstitutional by a federal court. Anti-abortion politicians must stop wasting our resources to advance unconstitutional anti-abortion policies that harm Texans.

When I was a young person, I would not have been able to safely access abortion care if I needed it and judicial bypass would have been a vital lifeline for me. Young people should be able to access healthcare without having to rely on judicial bypass at all, but until parental consent requirements are lifted, it is vital that judicial bypass is accessible and safe.

I urge the committee to vote no on HB 1171.

Brandon Arriaga

Self

San Antonio, TX

As a Texas resident, I stand for the pregnant minor to have full right of their body and no one should answer for someone else concerning a traumatic situation such as pregnancy.

Kim Varela-Broxson

Self

Austin, TX

My name is Kim and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people.

When young people choose to have an abortion, they are doing so because this is the choice that is best for them, their future, and their families. This is not something a randomly assigned lawyer should have the right to intervene on - it is a decision for a young person and their doctor.

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The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth.

I believe strongly in bodily autonomy - and this includes young people! It is up to each individual person to decide what happens to their body, and there are absolutely instances where parental involvement is more harmful than helpful.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Andrea Elizondo

Self

Austin, TX

Dear Chairman Jeff Leach, Vice Chairwoman Yvonne Davis, and House Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence Committee Members,

My name is Andrea Elizondo and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people.

Freedom is a strong Texas value that should be cherished and not tarnished by individual personal beliefs. Youth should have the freedom to bodily autonomy, which is the right to governance over our own bodies. Youth should be encouraged to practice their freedoms without the fear of stigma and government infringement.

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth.

The 4th amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees the right to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures. This amendment is often argued as protecting our right to privacy. In *Roe v. Wade* (1973), the Court extended the right of privacy to the decision to have an abortion. Texas youth should have the liberty to practice their right of privacy to the decision to have an abortion without government infringement. The right of privacy includes confidential abortion care.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled in *H.L. v. Matheson* (1981), that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment.

Donald Trump, Business Owner

SELF/Licensed Plumber

Dallas, TX

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The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171. People living in poverty, and marginalized individuals are very important to me and I am sick of seeing my people suffer from these oppressive BILLS. Please help The People that are most affected have to be HEARD.

Laurel Petriello

self/marketing

Austin, TX

My name is Laurel Petriello, and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people.

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

April Sanchez Gates

Self- attorney

San Antonio, TX

A pregnant minor has two adults at her side to guide her through the process of seeking a judicial bypass (AAL and GAL). The GAL for the minor takes into account the fetus and often what is best for the minor is also what is best for the fetus. Adding in additional parties to this difficult process jeopardizes the minor's confidentiality, adds an additional barrier to her legal right to seek a bypass, and will take more time in what is already a time sensitive process. Appointing a AAL or GAL for an unborn child is also redundant; the factors that person would look at are likely the same as those the GAL and AAL for the minor look at. This would also add additional costs to taxpayers if a judge orders fees to be paid to the GAL/AAL for the minor. Judicial bypass was created to protect vulnerable minors, and having a party who could effectively stop a bypass from happening does the opposite of protecting the minor.

John Ryan Hormell

self, law student

Austin, TX

My name is June Hormell, I am currently a law student at the University of Texas. I am writing to oppose HB 1171. During law school I have volunteered at a hotline that helps minors access abortion services. The young people that text in on my shift are poised and resolved, but are at times also distressed and nervous about the legal process they will have to go through. To force these minors to sit through a legal proceeding where an attorney exists to oppose and question their very tough decision will add more trauma to what is already a very stressful experience.

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This is also a waste of money. Our state needs better childcare and infrastructure, not more money spent on unnecessary lawyers. The judges of this great state are very much able to navigate and adjudicate a hearing of this nature with or without the expense of an extra attorney.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Joseph Kubik

myself

Austin, TX

HB 1171 threatens the confidentiality of judicial bypass. It risks the safety of teens seeking abortion care.

A similar bill was passed in Alabama in 2014 and a federal court found it unconstitutional. HB 1171 violates young people's Constitutional right to a confidential, expeditious bypass process.

HB 1171 makes the judicial bypass process even more stigmatizing and burdensome for Texas teens.

Neesha Dave, Deputy Director

The Lilith Fund for Reproductive Equity

Austin, TX

My name is Neesha Davé and I am opposed to House Bill 1171. I am writing today on behalf of The Lilith Fund for Reproductive Equity. HB 1171 would allow a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people.

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth.

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Maya Gonzalez

Self - nonprofit worker

Allen, TX

I am writing to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people.

This past year, I became a volunteer for an organization here in Texas helping youth access birth control and abortion, and in doing such, became educated on the number of bills that make it difficult - if not impossible - for most youth to get safe healthcare. Most Texas youth do not receive quality, science-based sex education (I certainly did not). I know from volunteering with the reproductive justice organization that many youth who need abortions did take preventative measures.

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Sarah Claytor

Self

AUSTIN, TX

My name is Sarah Claytor and I write to oppose HB 1171. An unborn child is not yet a person and does not need legal representation. All people, including teenagers, deserve the right to bodily autonomy. The state of Texas has already put into place strict barriers to getting the safe, legal, constitutionally protected medical procedure of abortion. Minors have additional barriers, needing parental permission or to seek a judicial bypass. This process is already onerous and complicated enough. HB 1171 violates young people's Constitutional right to a confidential, expeditious bypass process. Furthermore, similar laws in other states have been found unconstitutional, making this bill a waste of time and taxpayer money. Most Texans support a person's right to an abortion and are far more concerned with the lack of Medicaid expansion and regulations on power & gas companies. Parental involvement laws already make it difficult for the most vulnerable teenagers to exercise their right to not be forced to give birth. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Lily Crane

Self, Social Work Student

Austin, TX

My name is Lily Crane and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people.

As a social work student and intern in Texas, I work with youth and am educated on youth development and mental health. Suicide rates among our youth are staggeringly high -- In Texas, 1 in 4 high school girls have seriously considered attempting suicide. By requiring youth to receive parental consent, I deeply fear the repercussions on individuals mental health and the despair they may feel in not having any options if they have an unwanted pregnancy.

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth.

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Jamie Pettit
self, self employed
Wimberley, TX

I am against House Bill 1171. Young Texans have enough trauma going through a system that discounts and shames their autonomy and personhood. The additional requirement to have a lawyer appointed for a potential human introduces an unwarranted and unnecessary burden into an already confusing and stressful situation. Let this decision remain as private as possible. House Bill 1171 should not pass!

Andrea Reyes
Deeds Not Words
Austin, TX

The Texas youth we represent at Deeds Not Words do not need more obstacles when seeking abortion care. HB 1171 is an awful bill that would allow the appointment of a guardian or attorney ad litem for the fetus in a judicial bypass proceeding. This bill would threaten the confidentiality of judicial bypass, risk the safety of young people seeking confidential abortion care, and further stigmatize abortions for young Texans. Representatives in this committee should be creating access to the care we decide for ourselves instead of creating more barriers and furthermore making decisions about our bodies without our consent.

Danna Lamb-Vines
Self
Lubbock, TX

My name is Danna Leann Lamb-Vines, and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people.

Youth need to be able to access abortion under many circumstances including, but not limited to incest, rape, health reasons and a simple need to have jurisdiction over their bodies, minds and spirits.

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth.

Youth can be some of the most vulnerable people to those closest to them depending upon family conditions. It is imperative that youth have access to abortion services when they are needed.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Veronica Rodriguez, Ms.
Self - Birth Doula
Pharr, TX

My name is Veronica and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people.

My experiences as a birth doula have shown me the need for bodily autonomy and informed consent and comprehensive sex education amongst the young population. Young people cannot live into their personhood fully if they cannot exercise autonomy via informed consent, and they cannot make fully informed decisions if they are given misinformation, or if their choices are taken away.

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth.

As adults seeking abortions, women are asked to lay bare the most intimate details of their lives to public judgment in ways that are not required in most other developed nations. For youths, this situation is similar, yet worsened by the fact that their choices are limited not only by abortion restrictions, but often by adults making choices on their behalf—adults who do not share the same beliefs, goals, and who do not understand basic reproductive concepts. The situation is even more dire for young people who are victims of abuse, assault, neglect, and discrimination from their very own parents/guardians. As a woman who grew up in a very religious household, I can understand how difficult it is as a young person to obtain the correct information, resources, and confidence to make your own informed choices in a restrictive family unit.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Shelby Schram

Self

Eules, TX

My name is Shelby Schram and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people.

I have personally worked with minors accessing abortion care and to treat them in such an undignified manner is disgusting. They are young adults, making decisions for their own lives, safety, and families. The state should not have a say in that process.

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth.

Young people who have to deal with difficult home lives daily, know what is best for themselves and a potential child, not the state. The fact that the state deems the care of a fetus above that of a sentient, human struggling with the existence of daily life is a slap in the face. This only creates more undue burden in an already dragged out process for a simplistic healthcare procedure that all people should have access to, regardless of age.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Alexana Carter

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Self

San Angelo, TX

This bill threatens the confidentiality of judicial bypass and risks the safety of teens seeking abortion care. It also is a waste of taxpayer dollars to try to pass this when a similar bill was passed in Alabama in 2014, then a federal court found it unconstitutional. Additionally, HB 1171 violates young people's Constitutional right to a confidential, expeditious bypass process and makes the judicial bypass process even more stigmatizing and burdensome for Texas teens. Texas politicians seem determined to keep citizens' voices from being heard.

Hilah Johnson

self, writer

Austin, TX

I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Ariana Katechis

Self

Houston, TX

I write to oppose House Bill 1171. This bill would harm the health and safety of young people.

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth.

Andrew Roush

self

Bastrop, TX

I'm Andrew, a Bastrop resident. In fact, I was born and raised in Texas, studied at UT, and have returned as an adult. I'm writing in opposition to House Bill 1171. This is a quasi-religious, cultural damaging, and legally unfounded bill that not only does not relate to the urgent collective business of the state, but makes its residents less safe. Beyond that, it violates the principles of individual choice and liberty so many of our elected representatives espouse during election seasons.

It's vital that you understand that our state's bold sense of swagger is not some bigoted sense of moral superiority, but instead a commitment to a resilient sense of possibility. It is not cultural conservatism, but cultural progress. Texas is a state defined by its sense of the future. For some of the very legislators who mortgage our future through unfettered greed and environmental irresponsibility to claim they are standing for the future to sell out their very own constituents is simply evidence of their desire to use culture and religion to keep the powerful safe and the weak stuck. And to do so in the name of the weak, the unborn, is disgusting.

The fact is, teens facing this decision, who have supportive families, seek the guidance of those families. You can see that this means those who do choose judicial bypass must do so under immense strain, stress, and lack of resources. These young people

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risk homelessness, assault, and many forms of trauma for being pregnant, even being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized young people, as well. Does your religion tell you to defend the weak? Why the unborn and not the minors living in this precarious situation, here, amongst you? Will you sacrifice one for the other using your legal power? Will you sleep well?

Instead of advocating for the downtrodden young people in question, this bill, if passed, would actively antagonize them. Image yourself in such a position — young, scared, unsupported — and now facing an adult lawyer arguing against you. To think Republicans would be so willing to use the state, the government, to antagonize the weak is simply wrong.

Legislators might also note that the Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to agree to abortion care. Texas is required provide judicial bypass and the process must be expeditious and confidential. This bill violates that confidentiality. What's more, it violates the safety and peace of mind of you constituents. Allowing a court to appoint an "attorney or guardian ad litem" is simply another way to negatively impact some of your most needy fellow Texans. In short — keep you government hands out of people's private and confidential business, if that's a principle to which you aspire.

Oscar Gonzalez

Self

Allen, TX

oppose this bill. It would hinder an already compromised right to privacy and choice of Texas women. Texas does not lift a finger to help those in need, and I include infants and women. Appointing a guardian ad litem is pure theater. Please, just once, stop embarrassing our state in front of the rest of the country. For once, help women.

Ashley Ayala

Self

Austin, TX

This bill is incredibly disturbing. The fetus does not have rights, the minor child does. You cannot violate or attempt to supersede an individual's rights in some misguided attempt to "represent" a fetus.

Daniel Johnson

Self

Cedar Park, TX

This decision should be up to the parents guardian, not a minor. Also the state should find out who the guardian is. The state should not make that decision.

Melissa Thrailkill

Self

Dallas, TX

My name is Melissa Thrailkill, and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people.

I am an attorney who helps minors obtain abortions under the current law. I have helped more than 20 young Texans obtain the healthcare they need, and all of their stories are different, but compelling. Every story is tinged with desperation, but also with hope. The law already makes it incredibly hard for these Texans to access justice and healthcare, all because they're young and all because of the type of care they seek. In a state that prides itself on liberty, it is sometimes shameful what lawmakers require Texans, including the legal profession, go through to ensure that young people can secure justice and recognize their

constitutional rights.

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth.

Every family is different, and some of the young people in Texas live in deep poverty, others are de facto orphans, and others live in households where their voices are stifled, or worse. Texas policy prevents many from accessing birth control, ignoring the reality of human nature and human reproduction. Teens have right to confidential care and access to justice. Further, this bill unnecessarily increases court costs paid by the state, as well as interferes with the legal process, causing unnecessary delay for the courts and teens.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Allyson Roush

Self

Bastrop, TX

My name is Allyson and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people.

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth.

Texas youth deserve reproductive freedom and autonomy.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Charlotte Roberts

Self

Houston, TX

If fetuses are people why can't we claim them as dependents on taxes?

In all seriousness, this law is clearly taking advantage of minority legal status to force a procreative agenda, has no protections for survivors of rape or their mental health, opens the door to abusers and rapists seeking legal action against minor survivors of rape and abuse and I'm just so sick of these laws that keep trying to force procreation on everyone. It's terrifying that my government wants to control my body this way. Terrifying. As in I am filled with terror. By your legislation. One could say you're terrorizing women and children with this legislation, which would make y'all...

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Alexander Montalvo

self, consultant

Fort Worth, TX

I oppose House Bill 1171. Young Texans have enough trauma going through a system that discounts and shames their autonomy and personhood. The additional requirement to have a lawyer appointed for a potential being introduces an unwarranted and unnecessary burden into an already confusing and stressful situation. Let this decision remain as private as possible. House Bill 1171 should not pass!

Paige Alexandria

self, abortion clinic staff

Austin, TX

My name is Paige Alexandria and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people. As an abortion clinic staff member, someone who's had an abortion, and advocate for young people who need access to reproductive health services, this bill would have detrimental impacts on the health of young people who are already disproportionately affected by state and federal abortion restrictions. Instead, the state should focus its efforts on creating policies that have the pregnant person's best interest in mind, not policies that would establish an unfounded personhood of a fetus in order to make it harder for young people to access abortion.

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth. Even medical expert groups agree young people are entitled to confidential abortion care— something that contradicts the existence of parental involvement laws altogether. Many young people grow up in households where birth control or abortion isn't discussed as an option, which means involving a parent could have devastating effects on their physical and mental well-being by being forced to continue pregnancies they aren't ready for.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Paige Alexandria

self, texas abortion clinic staff

austin, TX

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Paige Slomin

Self

Austin, TX

My name is Paige Alexandria and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people. As an abortion clinic staff member, someone who's had an abortion, and advocate for young people who need access to reproductive health services, this bill would have detrimental impacts on the health of young people who are already disproportionately affected by state and federal abortion restrictions. Instead, the state should focus its efforts on creating policies that have the pregnant person's best interest in mind, not policies that would establish an unfounded personhood of a fetus in order to make it harder for young people to access abortion.

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Emily Obront

Self, Reproductive Psychotherapist

Austin, TX

This bill is a blatant attempt to delay and stigmatize abortion care. Time and again, research has shown that parental involvement laws delay access to healthcare for young people without having any clear impact on lowering abortion rates or encouraging minors to talk to their parents about their abortions. Most young people already choose to involve a parent or guardian in their abortion decision; thus, adding procedural burdens only serves to delay care for those that cannot involve a parent. Instead of cornering young people and potentially putting them in harm's way, a better practice might be to provide young people in Texas with medically accurate sex education and access to reproductive health services to which they can consent to their own care.

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Rebecca Flowers

Self / Marketing

Houston, TX

My name is Rebecca Flowers and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people. Access to safe abortion is essential and without it, the lives of Texans are at risk. Young women of Texas have the right to bodily autonomy and to make the decision if they want to give birth.

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Eduardo Aguillon, Sr.

Self

Galena park, TX

My name is Eduardo, i am writing today to oppose HB 1171 bill. HB 1171 bill allows a court to appoint an attorney ad item or guardian ad item to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing.

I am wringing today because abortion is a health right. I care about abortion because i believe people have the right, regardless of age to choose what is right for their bodies. To have autonomy over our bodies. These are limitations that put people at risk that put young peoples lives at risk. To know that HB 1171 simply seeks to shame and further stigmatize abortion care and puts people in danger.

This violates young peoples constitutional right to a confidential expeditious bypass The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth.

I think its important to keep confidentiality to protect young people from trauma, abuse, experiencing homelessness and more dangers and this bill is not helping at all. Confidentiality is safety.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Magdalena Shen

self

Austin, TX

I, Magdalena Shen am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or

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guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

The judicial bypass process is intended to ensure that states do not create a parental veto to abortion access for young people under 18, which would be unconstitutional under the United States Supreme Court Case, *Belotti v. Baird*, 443 U.S. 622 (1979). The inquiry in a bypass case is narrowly tailored to whether the applicant is mature and informed enough to make this decision for themselves or whether notification and an attempt to get consent would not be in the applicant's best interest. There are no other factors for the court to consider, and so it is outside the scope of these hearings to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus. Furthermore, no competent, ethical attorney would consent to this appointment.

Appointing an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass hearing would have the effect of turning these hearings into adversarial procedures and further creates an undue burden on young people's access to abortion care.

Young people need to have access to health care, information, and resources when they are faced with an important life decision – not barriers and delays. Instead of laws that hurt our families, we should invest in solutions that work for every young person, family, and community. A young person seeking an abortion needs compassionate support and access to health care, information, and services; not a trial-like adjudication. The judicial bypass process is onerous, can be traumatic for a young person, and causes additional and unnecessary delays. HB 1171 will only intensify these barriers.

For these reasons Magdalena Shen strongly opposes House Bill 1171.
Thank you for your consideration.

Melissa Rowell

Self

Marlin, TX

This bill is an is an affront to every young woman in Texas. There is not need for anyone to represent a fetus. In most cases, it's an embryo not a fetus. Neither embryos or a fetus have a right to live. They dont have any rights at all until they are born. They arent even and American citizen or a Texan until they are born. What exactly would they be protecting. The Texas legislature looks for every opportunity to dehumanize and control the women and girls of this state. That is NOT your job. You were not elected to force us to have children. The women and girls of this state dont need your help with making reproductive choices. We have a constitutional right to terminate a pregnancy. You dont have the right to force unnecessary hardships upon young girls who would rather not give birth. You are violating their rights and intruding on their privacy. Many of these girls are victims of incest or molestation, and it is unconscionable to subject them to even more persecution. They should have absolute control of their bodies and forcing them to give birth is just like raping them all over again. They are perfectly capable of deciding to have an abortion. If they are not mature enough to make that decision they are not mature enough to go through childbirth. They are little more than children themselves. What kind of monster forces a child to endure that kind of pain? Spend your time protecting these girls instead of "a cluster of cells" that have no concept of it's own existence. Protecting the unborn is easy. You need to start putting this effort into protecting children that have already been born! We have children in foster care being neglected and abused physically and sexually. It IS your job to protect them. They are wards of the state and our foster care system is a disgrace. There are children at the border in desperate need of help, homeless children our governor simply wants out of sight, our infant mortality rate is higher than third world countries, but you cant violate women's rights protecting those children. So that's no fun for you. This state is on the verge of turning blue. And then you folks will be out of a job. And its policies like this that will keep turning it blue. You are vastly overstepping your authority. Women in Texas will not stand your interference in our personal lives. So back off of these nonsense bills. Abortion is the law of the land. It is here to stay. You need to change your

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ideology and just accept it or you can look for another job. There is no other medical procedure that is so burdened by unnecessary and invasive laws. None of you are qualified to make medical choices for me or any other woman or girl. Stick to what you know and stay out of woman's health care. We want funding, not your opinion. Because you are not the one that has to suffer the consequences of these idiotic laws you pass.

Meagan Stewart

Self, case manager

Denton, TX

Please vote against this bill. Please stop trying to take away our right to abortion. Fetuses are not people, so they are not entitled to legal representation. Fetuses do not get a say in what happens to someone else's body because they are not sentient beings. This is just another way that legislators are trying to force people to keep pregnancies they don't want. If a person is too young to make their own decision about whether or not to get an abortion, why on earth would you think they're old enough to parent a child?

Amy Downing

Creative Action Youth Art Non Profit

Austin, TX

I oppose HB 1171

HB 1171 threatens the confidentiality of judicial bypass. It risks the safety of teens seeking abortion care. A similar bill was passed in Alabama in 2014 and a federal court found it unconstitutional. HB 1171 violates young people's Constitutional right to a confidential, expeditious bypass process. HB 1171 makes the judicial bypass process even more stigmatizing and burdensome for Texas teens.

Paige Newton

Self

Austin, TX

My name is Paige Newton and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people.

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth.

You have clearly never found yourself in such a difficult situation which is why you're unable to possess empathy for these kids. They could have been raped. By a family member. Hence needing outside help and confidentiality.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Laurel Hays, Dr.

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self

Houston, TX

I oppose House Bill 1171. State rules are already too burdensome and traumatic for young people who want to access reproductive healthcare, as they are treated as less than a whole person owed bodily autonomy and the right to make decisions for themselves regarding abortion. The additional requirement to have a lawyer appointed for a fetus introduces an unwarranted and unnecessary burden into an already confusing and stressful situation. The state should not add more hurdles to a person's ability to make their own personal medical decisions. House Bill 1171 should not pass!

Rebecca Feronti

Self, teacher

Austin, TX

Do not take away a female's right to make choices about her own body. Pregnant teenagers are not developed enough emotionally to raise a child. Do not force them to have a child by preventing abortion, especially if you will choose not to provide the funds to fully raise that child. As a woman, it is terrifying to think I could become pregnant accidentally and then fall into poverty due being forced by a largely male legislature to raising a child. Do not pass this bill.

Jessica Tiedt

Self, Chief Court Administrator

Georgetown, TX

This is..... engineered to cause trauma. Please do not pass this bill out of committee, it won't reduce abortions, it is rife with potential for abuse. Thank you.

Michaela Lyons

Self

Austin, TX

I am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

The judicial bypass process is intended to ensure that states do not create a parental veto to abortion access for young people under 18, which would be unconstitutional under the United States Supreme Court Case, *Belotti v. Baird*, 443 U.S. 622 (1979).

The inquiry in a bypass case is narrowly tailored to whether the applicant is mature and informed enough to make this decision for themselves or whether notification and an attempt to get consent would not be in the applicant's best interest. There are no other factors for the court to consider, and so it is outside the scope of these hearings to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus. Furthermore, no competent, ethical attorney would consent to this appointment.

Appointing an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass hearing would have the effect of turning these hearings into adversarial procedures and further creates an undue burden on young people's access to abortion care.

Young people need to have access to health care, information, and resources when they are faced with an important life decision – not barriers and delays. Instead of laws that hurt our families, we should invest in solutions that work for every young person, family, and community. A young person seeking an abortion needs compassionate support and access to health care, information, and services; not a trial-like adjudication. The judicial bypass process is onerous, can be traumatic for a young person, and causes additional and unnecessary delays. HB 1171 will only intensify these barriers.

For these reasons I strongly opposes House Bill 1171. Thank you for your consideration.

Larry McLeskey

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Self

Austin, TX

Unborn humans are not humans and thereby Can not be represented. Abortion is legal in the USA so stop attacking it in the State Legislature!

Alan Bernstein

self

Bellaire, TX

I write against HB 1171. Due to state government inaction, hundreds of Texans needlessly died from the freeze this year and thousands needlessly from COVID-19. Ad litem should be required for already-born Texans who become victims of state inaction.

Natalie Weston

Self/Medical Student

Austin, TX

This bill is unconstitutional and places vulnerable young people in harm's way.

? Minors seeking a judicial bypass have a Constitutional guarantee of a confidential and expeditious judicial bypass process. Appointing an attorney ad litem for a fetus is in direct violation of both of these guarantees.

? Allowing the court to appoint an attorney ad litem for the fetus turns what is already an incredibly onerous procedure into an adversarial one.

Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth.

? Young people of color, immigrant youth, LGBTQ+ youth, young people in foster care, and young people experiencing homelessness already face incredibly difficult and systemic burdens as they seek medical care. They are also the youth most likely to seek a judicial bypass.

This is an attempt to delay and stigmatize abortion care.

? Parental involvement laws delay access to healthcare for young people without having any clear impact on lowering abortion rates or encouraging minors to talk to their parents about their abortions.

? Young people in Texas need medically accurate sex education, access to reproductive health services including contraception and abortion, and the right to consent to their own care.

? Most young people already choose to involve a parent or guardian in their abortion decision, adding procedural burdens only serves to delay care for those that cannot involve a parent.

Kristen Michaelson

self

Austin, TX

I am sick and tired of this government going out of its way to harass young women. Give us a break. Let's work on legislation that helps all Texans, not harms and demonizes a vulnerable few.

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AK Krauss

Self

Austin, TX

My name is AK Krauss and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people.

Young people deserve to have abortion care because they deserve to make decisions about their own bodies and futures. Their knowledge of themselves and what they are wanting, needing, and ready for matters. They are experts in their own experiences, and while the decision to seek an abortion is never an easy one, if that is what they choose, they should be able to get the care they seek.

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth.

These young people who already face so many barriers, and to whom the judicial bypass process is already difficult, do not need additional hurdles in their way. They deserve the right to make decisions about their own bodies, regardless of what their guardians may want to coerce them into. For young people in these sorts of situations, it is quite possible that a lack of a confidential proceeding would risk their safety, as they may be kicked out of their homes for wanting abortion care, or experience abuse or coercion from family members for wanting such care.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Megan Gordon

Self

Addison, TX

I oppose this bill. A similar one that passed in Alabama was deemed unconstitutional. Teens have the right to confidential bypass process and this bill impedes that. Bringing a stranger into the proceedings, one whose only purpose is to argue against the rights of the person who would actually have to carry that pregnancy to term, is clearly punitive and will only serve to slow down the process. If we are truly interested in the rights of children, we should focus on caring for them and supporting them once they are born—otherwise it's just about controlling women.

Jeni Putalavage-Ross

RoundUp App

AUSTIN, TX

My name is Jeni Putalavage-Ross and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people.

Young people deserve control over their bodies, including the right to determine if and when they want to become parents. As a mother of three young daughters, I will ALWAYS fight for their right to reproductive choice.

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The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth.

I want to ensure the safety of young Texans who want to access abortion and your ridiculous barrier of requiring an attorney to work against them shows your total lack of compassion.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Gloria Lepow

Self

Houston, TX

The judicial bypass process is a burden and barrier to abortion access for many young people under 18. Allowing the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus turns what is already an incredibly onerous procedure into an adversarial one, and should not be permitted. I oppose.

LAURA HELFRICH

Self, caregiver

Pearland, TX

HB 1171 threatens the confidentiality of judicial bypass. It risks the safety of teens seeking abortion care.

A similar bill was passed in Alabama in 2014 and a federal court found it unconstitutional. HB 1171 violates young people's Constitutional right to a confidential, expeditious bypass process.

HB 1171 makes the judicial bypass process even more stigmatizing and burdensome for Texas teens.

This is NOT representative of small government. This is a step towards fascism. Quit wasting our tax dollars on unconstitutional tripe!

morgan gimblet

self

san antonio, TX

HB 1171 is an appalling bill that would allow a judge to appoint a guardian ad litem for a fetus during a judicial bypass hearing! STOP HB 1171!

Rebecca Savage

n/a

SAN ANTONIO, TX

My name is Rebecca Savage and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people. Pregnancy comes with serious risks, up to and including death, more so in the U.S. than in most other developed countries. Access to abortion is basic healthcare, and must be available to teens, who are even more

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likely to experience serious complications during pregnancy.

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth. I trust young people to know more about their family situation than any outside observer, and believe that confidential care is absolutely necessary to protect the most vulnerable youth from additional harm.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Shira Goldstein

self

Houston, TX

I am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

The judicial bypass process is intended to ensure that states do not create a parental veto to abortion access for young people under 18, which would be unconstitutional under the United States Supreme Court Case, *Belotti v. Baird*, 443 U.S. 622 (1979).

The inquiry in a bypass case is narrowly tailored to whether the applicant is mature and informed enough to make this decision for themselves or whether notification and an attempt to get consent would not be in the applicant's best interest. There are no other factors for the court to consider, and so it is outside the scope of these hearings to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus. Furthermore, no competent, ethical attorney would consent to this appointment.

Appointing an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass hearing would have the effect of turning these hearings into adversarial procedures and further creates an undue burden on young people's access to abortion care.

Young people need to have access to health care, information, and resources when they are faced with an important life decision – not barriers and delays. Instead of laws that hurt our families, we should invest in solutions that work for every young person, family, and community. A young person seeking an abortion needs compassionate support and access to health care, information, and services; not a trial-like adjudication. The judicial bypass process is onerous, can be traumatic for a young person, and causes additional and unnecessary delays. HB 1171 will only intensify these barriers.

For these reasons I strongly opposes House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration.

Laura Payet

Self - legal writer

Austin, TX

HB1171 threatens the confidentiality of judicial bypass for teens. Similar bills have already been ruled unconstitutional because they violate a teen's right to a confidential, expeditious bypass. The bill does nothing to help teens going through the process and isn't medically necessary. A fetus is not a person and doesn't need representation, particularly at the expense of a teen's right to access abortion. The Legislature should have enough to occupy itself, with the ongoing pandemic and addressing the statewide energy crisis, instead of wasting time passing blatantly unconstitutional, performative bills that help no one.

Kathryn D'Amore

self

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Austin, TX

My name is Kathryn D'Amore and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people.

I believe young people have the right to determine what is best for themselves, their life and their body--they are more than capable of determining for themselves if parenting is the right option.

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions chose to do so. As a result, young people seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171.

Benjamin Huntley, Dr

self

Houston, TX

I, Benjamin Huntley, am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

The judicial bypass process is intended to ensure that states do not create a parental veto to abortion access for young people under 18, which would be unconstitutional under the United States Supreme Court Case, *Belotti v. Baird*, 443 U.S. 622 (1979). The inquiry in a bypass case is narrowly tailored to whether the applicant is mature and informed enough to make this decision for themselves or whether notification and an attempt to get consent would not be in the applicant's best interest. There are no other factors for the court to consider, and so it is outside the scope of these hearings to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus.

Appointing an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass hearing would have the effect of turning these hearings into adversarial procedures and further creates an undue burden on young people's access to abortion care.

Young people need to have access to health care, information, and resources when they are faced with an important life decision – not barriers and delays. Instead of laws that hurt our families, we should invest in solutions that work for every young person, family, and community. A young person seeking an abortion needs compassionate support and access to health care, information, and services; not a trial-like adjudication. The judicial bypass process is onerous, can be traumatic for a young person, and causes additional and unnecessary delays. HB 1171 will only intensify these barriers.

For these reasons I strongly opposes House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration.

Cally Wade

Self

Corinth, TX

I, Cally am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many

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For these reasons I strongly oppose House Bill 1171. Thank you for your consideration.

Alexandra Vallera

Self, medical student

Houston, TX

I, Alexandra Vallera, write on behalf of myself to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

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For these reasons I strongly oppose House Bill 1171.
Thank you for your consideration.

Allison Engel

Self

Carrollton, TX

I, Allison Engel, am writing to oppose the Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

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Young people need to have access to health care, information, and resources when they are faced with an important life decision – not barriers and delays. Instead of laws that hurt our families, we should invest in solutions that work for every young person, family, and community. A young person seeking an abortion needs compassionate support and access to health care, information, and services; not a trial-like adjudication. The judicial bypass process is onerous, can be traumatic for a young person, and causes additional and unnecessary delays. HB 1171 will only intensify these barriers.

For these reasons I strongly oppose House Bill 1171. Thank you for your consideration.

Amanda Bennett

Self

Austin, TX

My name is Amanda Bennett, and I am writing to oppose HB 1171.

This bill wastes Texans time and money: A similar bill passed in Alabama in 2014 was found to be unconstitutional by a federal court. Ever since the Supreme Court created the judicial bypass process in *Belotti v. Baird* in 1979, judicial bypass cases have been non-adversarial. They also have to be confidential and expeditious. Introducing another attorney who is not representing the young person seriously compromises the young person's confidentiality, as well as the expeditiousness of the judicial bypass process.

In 2015, this legislature passed HB 3994, which forces young people to file for judicial bypass cases in their county of residence, with very few exceptions. Young people in small towns must still go to their local courthouse. It's hard enough to find 2 people who can keep these cases confidential - the lawyer and the guardian ad litem for the Jane Doe (which already have to be two separate individuals because of that same bill). Adding a third person into the room is excessive and dangerous for a young person's confidentiality.

Most importantly, this law seeks only to stigmatize and traumatize young people who are already dealing with the challenges of having to get an abortion without parental support. We must support young people, whether they want to have an abortion or if they want to continue their pregnancy. This bill does not help create supports for pregnant youth; instead, it cruelly humiliates young people who already have to suffer through a long and tedious process that invites strangers (lawyers and judges) into their intimate pregnancy decisions. HB 1171 would lengthen the process, invite yet more strangers into the courtroom, and insert anti-abortion rhetoric into a supposedly neutral courtroom.

To support young people who don't have parental support around their reproductive decisions, we should be giving them more autonomy - not taking their autonomy away. I am firmly against HB 1171. Do not pass this unconstitutional bill.

Kirsten Emery

Self

Odessa, TX

This should be unconstitutional. The one who is carrying should have the last say in whether or not they have an abortion. A fetus is not a person therefore should not be represented in court. This is ludicrous and a waste of tax payer money in cases where the court provides an attorney. Pass bills to help your constituents not to take away their rights and hinder them. Ridiculous.

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Margaret Cheu

Self, Attorney

Austin, TX

My name is Margaret Cheu and I oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people.

As an attorney, I frequently represent young Texans seeking judicial bypasses. Through this process, I have the great privilege to see how resilient, strong, and determined these members of our community are. Like all of us, my clients are Texans who deserve the utmost consideration and respect from their legislators.

The majority of young people who can safely involve a parent in their reproductive healthcare decisions choose to do so. As a result, young Texans seeking confidential care through the judicial bypass process are in very challenging situations. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will.

Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth. These young Texans, just coming into their own and full of incredible potential, deserve to have their voices heard in their own healthcare and their own futures. Failing to allow them access to safe abortion care, and the right to make their own choices, does them an incredible disservice.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds untold trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. For all these reasons, I oppose HB 1171, and I urge all Texas legislators to join me and do the right thing by our young people.

Natasha Rappazzo

self

Arlington, TX

My name is Natasha Rappazzo and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in judicial bypass hearing. This is an egregious politicization of a legal proceeding and harms the health and safety of young people. Abortion is a safe and normal procedure and minors have the right to consent to abortion care. Young people who are seeking an abortion thru the judicial bypass system are already facing multiple personal challenges. These minors risk being kicked out of their homes for being pregnant or being forced to carry a pregnancy against their will. Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth, including young people of color, young people experiencing homelessness, young people in foster care, immigrant youth, and LGBTQ+ youth. I am incredibly disturbed to see the state of Texas attempting to put more burden and trauma on minors who are simply trying to access the healthcare that they need to live their lives. The state of Texas must stop applying barriers to all Texans who try to access abortion care. Creating barriers to abortion that are so oppressive that it could leave a young person with no choice but to carry an unwanted pregnancy is incredibly cruel. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to abortion care. States with parental involvement laws, like Texas, must provide a judicial bypass process and that process must be expeditious and confidential. HB 1171 violates the confidentiality of the judicial bypass process and seeks to stigmatize the healthcare decisions of young people. Allowing a court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem creates more legal barriers and adds trauma to what is already an incredibly burdensome process. I oppose HB 1171

P N

self, attorney

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Houston, TX

My name is PN, and I write to oppose House Bill 1171. HB 1171 allows a court to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus in a judicial bypass hearing.

This bill represents a legally unsound theory of the judicial bypass and what it seeks to do.

First, minors have the constitutional right to seek abortion. Part of the point of a judicial bypass is to allow minors to seek that right confidentially. Adding an unnecessary person (who may not even be an attorney) into this process damages the confidentiality, and therefore the constitutionality, of the judicial bypass.

Second, the bill here cynically seeks to represent interests that are already represented in the judicial bypass process. The judicial bypass is designed so that the interests of the fetus in question are already represented by the judge, who subjects the minor to rigorous questioning during the hearing. The bill cruelly suggests that the minor operates from a self-centered position by placing the minor in an adversarial position to the representative of the fetus, and this is simply not the case. It requires tremendous maturity to understand and participate in the judicial bypass system, surrounded by adult strangers, during a very vulnerable time. It is vital to remember that judicial bypasses are for minors who do not have a safe adult to guide them through these important decisions. Perhaps simply being pregnant is dangerous in the home where the minor lives. Perhaps it is the minor's parent who is responsible for the pregnancy. What would a guardian ad litem add here?

Third, how would this guardian or attorney be selected? Wherever this representative comes from, adding expense, time, and consternation to a system already under strain should only be considered under circumstances that absolutely demand it. This whole exercise is political theatre by Sanford, who wants points for what? Making a child's life worse. Even viewed under the most charitable lens, that is what HB 1171 seeks to do. House Bill 1171 would only add hardship, expense, and cruelty to a process that is difficult already. For all these reasons, I strongly oppose HB 1171.

Louise Hytken

Texas League of Women Voters

DALLAS, TX

League of Women Voters of Texas

Louise Hytken, Women's Health Issue Chair

House Judiciary Committee – House portal

March 31, 2021

The Texas League of Women Voters opposes HB 1171. This bill relates to the appointment of an attorney to represent the fetus in a court proceeding authorizing a minor to obtain an abortion without parental consent. As discussed below, the appointment of an ad litem for a fetus has no relevance to the issues in a judicial bypass proceeding and such a law would be unconstitutional.

Under Texas law, a minor cannot obtain an abortion without the consent of her parents, unless she obtains a court order permitting her to do so. To get the court order, the minor must prove to a judge that she is mature and well-informed enough to consent to her own abortion, or that it is not in her best interest to involve her parents. Current law provides for a guardian ad litem to be appointed for the minor, in addition to an attorney who already represents the minor. However, HB 1171 seeks to further complicate the already onerous requirements for pregnant minors to obtain a court ordered judicial bypass of the parental consent laws. Under the proposed bill, yet another attorney could be appointed to represent the fetus in the court proceeding; however, that would serve no purpose.

As stated above, the purpose of a judicial bypass hearing in Texas is to determine whether a minor is mature and well-informed enough to decide to have an abortion without parental involvement, or if getting consent would harm the minor. The focus of the court proceeding is on the minor and the court isn't allowed to consider the interest of any third party in making that decision—particularly not that of a fetus. This appointment of an attorney to represent the fetus is nothing more than an effort to shame and harass pregnant minors who are already facing a difficult situation. A similar law passed in Alabama was struck down as unconstitutional by a federal court. (*Reproductive Health Services v. Marshall*, 268 F.Supp.3d 1261 (MD Ala 2017)).

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Last session, a similar bill was introduced, but it did not advance. We encourage you to again reject this effort to interfere with the judicial bypass process by such a meaningless and unconstitutional requirement.

Thank you for allowing us to share our position on this bill.

Louise Hytken, Advocacy Chair for Women's Health, lhytken@yahoo.com, 972-898-7042.

Isabelle Headrick

self, student

Austin, TX

I oppose HB 1171. The idea that a fetus is an unborn child is a religious/not a scientific, and therefore this bill attempts to impose a religious belief on Texas girls and women. In Judaism, my religion, a fetus is not considered a person until it has emerged from the womb and drawn its first breath. In many forms of Christianity and Islam, fetuses are not considered people. Therefore stop imposing your religion on others. Forcing a girl or woman to go through with an unwanted pregnancy is a form of slavery, and no child should come into the world unwanted. HB 1171 is unconstitutional and risks the safety of teens seeking abortion care.

Alison Takata

self

Austin, TX

Dear Esteemed Senators, I humbly urge you to vote NO on HB1171. This bill, if passed would severely restrict the health care rights of an individual seeking needed health care. Lawmakers have no business in the doctor's office of a woman. Please do not further harm women and girls with this harmful bill. Abortions are medically necessary and part of healthcare. This bill harms women.

Ana Rivera

Self

Austin, TX

I, Ana Rivera, am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

The judicial bypass process is intended to ensure that states do not create a parental veto to abortion access for young people under 18, which would be unconstitutional under the United States Supreme Court Case, *Belotti v. Baird*, 443 U.S. 622 (1979). The inquiry in a bypass case is narrowly tailored to whether the applicant is mature and informed enough to make this decision for themselves or whether notification and an attempt to get consent would not be in the applicant's best interest. There are no other factors for the court to consider, and so it is outside the scope of these hearings to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus. Furthermore, no competent, ethical attorney would consent to this appointment.

Appointing an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass hearing would have the effect of turning these hearings into adversarial procedures and further creates an undue burden on young people's access to abortion care.

Young people need to have access to health care, information, and resources when they are faced with an important life decision – not barriers and delays. Instead of laws that hurt our families, we should invest in solutions that work for every young person, family, and community. A young person seeking an abortion needs compassionate support and access to health care, information, and services; not a trial-like adjudication. The judicial bypass process is onerous, can be traumatic for a young person, and causes additional and unnecessary delays. HB 1171 will only intensify these barriers.

For these reasons I strongly oppose House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration.

Katherine Enyart

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Self/Supervisor

Austin, TX

I am opposed to this unconstitutional bill.

A similar bill was passed in Alabama in 2014 and a federal court found it unconstitutional. HB 1171 violates young people's Constitutional right to a confidential, expeditious bypass process.

Difficult medical and life decisions should be between a person and their doctor and their right to privacy and safe medical care should not be violated.

Edel Ruiseco, Attorney

self

Portland, TX

Causes additional problems for teenager attempting to exercise abortion rights. Appears to be an intentional delaying tactic and violates privacy rights.

Hailey Kaplan

Self and student

Austin, TX

I, Hailey Kaplan, am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

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The inquiry in a bypass case is narrowly tailored to whether the applicant is mature and informed enough to make this decision for themselves or whether notification and an attempt to get consent would not be in the applicant's best interest. There are no other factors for the court to consider, and so it is outside the scope of these hearings to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus. Furthermore, no competent, ethical attorney would consent to this appointment.

Appointing an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass hearing would have the effect of turning these hearings into adversarial procedures and further creates an undue burden on young people's access to abortion care.

Young people need to have access to health care, information, and resources when they are faced with an important life decision – not barriers and delays. Instead of laws that hurt our families, we should invest in solutions that work for every young person, family, and community. A young person seeking an abortion needs compassionate support and access to health care, information, and services; not a trial-like adjudication. The judicial bypass process is onerous, can be traumatic for a young person, and causes additional and unnecessary delays. HB 1171 will only intensify these barriers.

For these reasons I strongly opposes House Bill 1171. Thank you for your consideration.

Caryss Romero

Self student

Forney, TX

As a minor myself I'm seventeen and not able to vote for the president of the United States, so why would I be able to take care of a baby. Abortions are something that are going to continue even if it is illegal, why would you rather have your people in your state hiding things from you that are completely normal and should be treated as such. Picture this a minor that is close to you was to get raped and fall pregnant not only would she/they would have to deal with the trauma but stay reminded everyday almost like reliving a tragic event. The stress and mental stability of that minor would affect the fetus causing problems with the pregnancy. One reason or another minors can't always tell their guardian or their parents about these situations , anyone above the age of twenty one should be able to help minors in need. Let's just understand minors shouldn't be having unprotected sex but in

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reality who's going to stop them ? It's their choice to have sex and it's also their choice if they want an abortion.

Alfred Boss

Self, Engineer

Glenn Heights, TX

I am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

The judicial bypass process is intended to ensure that states do not create a parental veto to abortion access for young people under 18, which would be unconstitutional under the United States Supreme Court Case, *Belotti v. Baird*, 443 U.S. 622 (1979). The inquiry in a bypass case is narrowly tailored to whether the applicant is mature and informed enough to make this decision for themselves or whether notification and an attempt to get consent would not be in the applicant's best interest. There are no other factors for the court to consider, and so it is outside the scope of these hearings to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus. Furthermore, no competent, ethical attorney would consent to this appointment.

Appointing an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass hearing would have the effect of turning these hearings into adversarial procedures and further creates an undue burden on young people's access to abortion care.

Young people need to have access to health care, information, and resources when they are faced with an important life decision – not barriers and delays. Instead of laws that hurt our families, we should invest in solutions that work for every young person, family, and community. A young person seeking an abortion needs compassionate support and access to health care, information, and services; not a trial-like adjudication. The judicial bypass process is onerous, can be traumatic for a young person, and causes additional and unnecessary delays. HB 1171 will only intensify these barriers.

For these reasons I strongly opposes House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration.

Gizl Alindayu

self

Sugar Land, TX

I, Gizl Alindayu, am here to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

The judicial bypass process is intended to ensure that states do not create a parental veto to abortion access for young people under 18, which would be unconstitutional under the United States Supreme Court Case, *Belotti v. Baird*, 443 U.S. 622 (1979). The inquiry in a bypass case is narrowly tailored to whether the applicant is mature and informed enough to make this decision for themselves or whether notification and an attempt to get consent would not be in the applicant's best interest. There are no other factors for the court to consider, and so it is outside the scope of these hearings to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus. Furthermore, no competent, ethical attorney would consent to this appointment.

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For these reasons I strongly opposes House Bill 1171. Thank you for your consideration.

Cynthia Cameron, Attorney

Cynthia T. Cameron, Attorney at Law, P. C.

Pearland, TX

NO to HB 1171.

This bill threatens the confidentiality of judicial bypass. It risks the safety of teens seeking abortion care.

A similar bill was passed in Alabama in 2014 and a federal court found it unconstitutional. HB 1171 violates young people's Constitutional right to a confidential, expeditious bypass process.

Martha Romero

Self

Forney, TX

Abortion is health care! Let women choose!

Sarah Cruthirds

self-graduate student

Spring, TX

I, Sarah Cruthirds am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings. Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers. The judicial bypass process is intended to ensure that states do not create a parental veto to abortion access for young people under 18, which would be unconstitutional under the United States Supreme Court Case, *Belotti v. Baird*, 443 U.S. 622 (1979). The inquiry in a bypass case is narrowly tailored to whether the applicant is mature and informed enough to make this decision for themselves or whether notification and an attempt to get consent would not be in the applicant's best interest. There are no other factors for the court to consider, and so it is outside the scope of these hearings to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus. Furthermore, no competent, ethical attorney would consent to this appointment.

Appointing an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass hearing would have the effect of turning these hearings into adversarial procedures and further creates an undue burden on young people's access to abortion care. Young people need to have access to health care, information, and resources when they are faced with an important life decision – not barriers and delays. Instead of laws that hurt our families, we should invest in solutions that work for every young person, family, and community. A young person seeking an abortion needs compassionate support and access to health care, information, and services; not a trial-like adjudication. The judicial bypass process is onerous, can be traumatic for a young person, and causes additional and unnecessary delays. HB 1171 will only intensify these barriers.

For these reasons I strongly oppose House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sarah Cruthirds

Victoria Nelson

Self, student

Richmond, TX

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I, Victoria Nelson am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

The judicial bypass process is intended to ensure that states do not create a parental veto to abortion access for young people under 18, which would be unconstitutional under the United States Supreme Court Case, *Belotti v. Baird*, 443 U.S. 622 (1979). The inquiry in a bypass case is narrowly tailored to whether the applicant is mature and informed enough to make this decision for themselves or whether notification and an attempt to get consent would not be in the applicant's best interest. There are no other factors for the court to consider, and so it is outside the scope of these hearings to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus. Furthermore, no competent, ethical attorney would consent to this appointment.

Appointing an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass hearing would have the effect of turning these hearings into adversarial procedures and further creates an undue burden on young people's access to abortion care.

Young people need to have access to health care, information, and resources when they are faced with an important life decision – not barriers and delays. Instead of laws that hurt our families, we should invest in solutions that work for every young person, family, and community. A young person seeking an abortion needs compassionate support and access to health care, information, and services; not a trial-like adjudication. The judicial bypass process is onerous, can be traumatic for a young person, and causes additional and unnecessary delays. HB 1171 will only intensify these barriers.

For these reasons I, Victoria Nelson, strongly oppose House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lauren Thompson

self

San Antonio, TX

HB 1171 threatens the confidentiality of judicial bypass. It risks the safety of teens seeking abortion care.

A similar bill was passed in Alabama in 2014 and a federal court found it unconstitutional. HB 1171 violates young people's Constitutional right to a confidential, expeditious bypass process.

HB 1171 makes the judicial bypass process even more stigmatizing and burdensome for Texas teens.

Michelle Tran

Self and medical assistant

Murphy, TX

I, Michelle Tran, am writing to oppose the Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

The judicial bypass process is intended to ensure that states do not create a parental veto to abortion access for young people under 18, which would be unconstitutional under the United States Supreme Court Case, *Belotti v. Baird*, 443 U.S. 622 (1979). The inquiry in a bypass case is narrowly tailored to whether the applicant is mature and informed enough to make this decision for themselves or whether notification and an attempt to get consent would not be in the applicant's best interest. There are no other factors for the court to consider, and so it is outside the scope of these hearings to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus. Furthermore, no competent, ethical attorney would consent to this appointment.

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Appointing an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass hearing would have the effect of turning these hearings into adversarial procedures and further creates an undue burden on young people's access to abortion care.

Young people need to have access to health care, information, and resources when they are faced with an important life decision – not barriers and delays. Instead of laws that hurt our families, we should invest in solutions that work for every young person, family, and community. A young person seeking an abortion needs compassionate support and access to health care, information, and services; not a trial-like adjudication. The judicial bypass process is onerous, can be traumatic for a young person, and causes additional and unnecessary delays. HB 1171 will only intensify these barriers.

For these reasons I, Michelle Tran, strongly opposes House Bill 1171. Thank you for your consideration.

Sui Jin

Self, Student

Austin, TX

I, Sui Jin, am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

The judicial bypass process is intended to ensure that states do not create a parental veto to abortion access for young people under 18, which would be unconstitutional under the United States Supreme Court Case, *Belotti v. Baird*, 443 U.S. 622 (1979). The inquiry in a bypass case is narrowly tailored to whether the applicant is mature and informed enough to make this decision for themselves or whether notification and an attempt to get consent would not be in the applicant's best interest. There are no other factors for the court to consider, and so it is outside the scope of these hearings to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus. Furthermore, no competent, ethical attorney would consent to this appointment.

Appointing an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass hearing would have the effect of turning these hearings into adversarial procedures and further creates an undue burden on young people's access to abortion care.

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For these reasons I strongly opposes House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration.

Meg McDonald

TU Pro-Choice

San Antonio, TX

I, Meg McDonald write on behalf of Trinity University's TU Pro-Choice to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

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For these reasons TU Pro-Choice strongly opposes House Bill 1171. Thank you for your consideration.

Vail Kohnert-Yount

self, attorney

Houston, TX

I am writing to oppose HB 1171, which makes the judicial bypass process even more stigmatizing and burdensome for young people in Texas. HB 1171 threatens the confidentiality of judicial bypass, which risks the safety of people under 18 seeking abortion care.

In addition to being cruel, this bill is unconstitutional and therefore a waste of the Texas Legislature's limited time and resources. A similar bill was passed in Alabama in 2014, which a federal court found unconstitutional. Likewise, HB 1171 violates young people's Constitutional right to a confidential, expeditious bypass process.

I urge our representatives to oppose this unnecessary and harmful bill.

Bryant Nguyen, Mr.

myself

Allen, TX

I, Bryant Nguyen, am writing to oppose the Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

The judicial bypass process is intended to ensure that states do not create a parental veto to abortion access for young people under 18, which would be unconstitutional under the United States Supreme Court Case, *Belotti v. Baird*, 443 U.S. 622 (1979).

The inquiry in a bypass case is narrowly tailored to whether the applicant is mature and informed enough to make this decision for themselves or whether notification and an attempt to get consent would not be in the applicant's best interest.

There are no other factors for the court to consider, and so it is outside the scope of these hearings to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus. Furthermore, no competent, ethical attorney would consent to this appointment.

Appointing an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass hearing would have the effect of turning these hearings into adversarial procedures and further creates an undue burden on young people's access to abortion care.

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A young person seeking an abortion needs compassionate support and access to health care, information, and services; not a trial-like adjudication.

The judicial bypass process is onerous, can be traumatic for a young person, and causes additional and unnecessary delays.

HB 1171 will only intensify these barriers.

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For these reasons, I strongly oppose House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sarah McWilliam

self

Pflugerville, TX

I, Sarah McWilliam am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

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Appointing an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass hearing would have the effect of turning these hearings into adversarial procedures and further creates an undue burden on young people's access to abortion care.

Young people need to have access to health care, information, and resources when they are faced with an important life decision – not barriers and delays. Instead of laws that hurt our families, we should invest in solutions that work for every young person, family, and community. A young person seeking an abortion needs compassionate support and access to health care, information, and services; not a trial-like adjudication. The judicial bypass process is onerous, can be traumatic for a young person, and causes additional and unnecessary delays. HB 1171 will only intensify these barriers.

For these reasons I strongly opposes House Bill 1171. Thank you for your consideration.

Ugomma Ugwu

Self, Student

Rowlett, TX

I, Ugomma Ugwu, am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

The judicial bypass process is intended to ensure that states do not create a parental veto to abortion access for young people under 18, which would be unconstitutional under the United States Supreme Court Case, *Belotti v. Baird*, 443 U.S. 622 (1979).

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For these reasons I strongly opposes House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration.

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Peggie Kohnert

Self - Realtor

Houston, TX

I STRONGLY oppose HB 1171 seeking to allow an ad litem attorney to be named for a fetus in the case of a judicial bypass request! It is already a difficult situation for a frightened teenage girl to be involved in and to interfere with her right to a legal abortion is a overreach of governmental authority. I urge to vote against this bill. Thank you.

Diana McKinnon

self, student of Medicine

The Woodlands, TX

I, Diana McKinnon, Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings. Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

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For these reasons I strongly opposes House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration

Lindsey Jones

self, Teacher

Tomball, TX

I DO NOT support HB 1171. This bill would impose an undue burden for mothers seeking appropriate and personal health care for a dangerous medical condition. It is every woman's choice to decide what medical procedures are appropriate and necessary for her own body and health, and requiring an attorney to be involved during this already difficult decision is a harmful impediment to a woman's right to choose.

Madison Siclait, Ms

Self

Edinburg, TX

This is going against the right of women and limiting the power and choice of a woman to terminate a pregnancy

anne barnard

self

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Houston, TX

I am AGAINST HB 1171.

HB 1171 threatens the confidentiality of judicial bypass. It risks the safety of teens seeking abortion care.

A similar bill was passed in Alabama in 2014 and a federal court found it unconstitutional.

HB 1171 violates young people's Constitutional right to a confidential, expeditious bypass process.

HB 1171 makes the judicial bypass process even more stigmatizing and burdensome for Texas teens.

Saatvik Ahluwalia

Self

Austin, TX

HB1171 is incredibly cruel and must be opposed. A federal court has already determined that there was no purpose in appointing a guardian or attorney for the fetus and that doing so violated minors' assurance of anonymity and confidentiality. Laws requiring parental involvement in abortion care are opposed by the American Medical Association, the Society for Adolescent Medicine, the American Public Health Association, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Minors seeking a judicial bypass have a Constitutional guarantee of a confidential and expeditious judicial bypass process. Appointing an attorney ad litem for a fetus is an indirect violation of both of these guarantees. In addition, Young people of color, immigrant youth, LGBTQ+ youth, young people in foster care, young people experiencing homelessness already face incredibly difficult and systemic burdens as they seek medical care. They are also the youth most likely to seek a judicial bypass.

Please vote against HB1171.

Logan Muzyka

Self-Student at Trinity University

San Antonio, TX

I, Logan Muzyka, am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

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For these reasons I strongly opposes House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration.

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Grace Kim
Self
Houston, TX

I, Grace Kim, am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

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For these reasons [I or Org Name] strongly opposes House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration

Grace

Melissa Demock
University of Texas at Austin
AUSTIN, TX

I, Melissa Demock, am writing to oppose the Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

The judicial bypass process is intended to ensure that states do not create a parental veto to abortion access for young people under 18, which would be unconstitutional under the United States Supreme Court Case, *Belotti v. Baird*, 443 U.S. 622 (1979).

The inquiry in a bypass case is narrowly tailored to whether the applicant is mature and informed enough to make this decision for themselves or whether notification and an attempt to get consent would not be in the applicant's best interest. There are no other factors for the court to consider, and so it is outside the scope of these hearings to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus. Furthermore, no competent, ethical attorney would consent to this appointment.

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For these reasons, I strongly oppose House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration.

Melissa Demock, Texas Resident

Austin Dupree

self

Alpine, TX

I am vehemently opposed to this bill for the following reasons:

HB 1171 threatens the confidentiality of the judicial bypass. It risks the safety of teens seeking abortion care.

A similar bill was passed in Alabama in 2014 and a federal court found it unconstitutional. HB 1171 violates young people's Constitutional right to a confidential, expeditious bypass process.

HB 1171 makes the judicial bypass process even more stigmatizing and burdensome for Texas teens.

Suzanne Simon

self

MARFA, TX

I, Suzanne Simon, am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

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For these reasons I strongly oppose House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jerel Twyman

self

Bellaire, TX

I strongly oppose HB 1171. Requiring or allowing the appointment of an additional ad litem in this circumstance adds no tangible benefit to the judicial bypass process. The additional ad litem's role could only be to put anti-choice dogma on the record -- the substance of which cannot differ in any real way from one case to the next. This bill adds to the stigma and burden to the young applicants, offers absolutely no benefit to the process, and it results in additional costs, all of which would be paid

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by the State of Texas pursuant to Section 33.007 of the Texas Family Code. I urge each of you to oppose this bill.

Patsy Hurt

self

Houston, TX

This is a ridiculous obstacle to an already rigorous procedure especially for women of color and in poverty. I am opposed to this bill, adamantly so. I really wish you would spend less time attacking abortion rights and more time making sure our electric grid worked properly, that basic services were provided to your electorate. I find the time and effort taken up this issue to be a complete lack of regard for basic human rights and, once again, an affront to the poor. Texas, you should be ashamed of yourself.

Iris Vallavanatt

self

Sugar Land, TX

I, Iris G. Vallavanatt, am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

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For these reasons I strongly oppose House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration.

Grace Han

self

Allen, TX

I, Grace Han, am writing to oppose the Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

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For these reasons I strongly opposes House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration.

Elizabeth Fata

Self, student

Keller, TX

I, Elizabeth Fata, am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

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For these reason, I strongly oppose House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration

Lauren Beck

Self

Pearland, TX

I, Lauren Beck, am wriring to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

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For these reasons I strongly opposes House Bill 1171. Thank you for your consideration.

Jaquelin Dudley, Dr.

Self/Professor

Austin, TX

I am against HB 1171 since it provides additional costly and time-consuming impediments to an individual's right to make decisions about their health and the health of their children. This bill also has the most dramatic effects on minorities and women of color. Many of these women and their children will be sentenced to a life of poverty if this bill passes.

Sanjna Sandeep

Self

Frisco, TX

I, Sanjna Sandeep, am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

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For these reasons I strongly opposes House Bill 1171. Thank you for your consideration.

Carolyn Chen

self, medical student

Houston, TX

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For these reasons I strongly opposes House Bill 1171. Thank you for your consideration.

Kyle Kaeo

Self student

Austin, TX

I, Kyle Kaeo am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

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For these reasons Kyle Kaeo strongly opposes House Bill 1171. Thank you for your consideration.

Rita Leader, Ms.

self - attorney

Houston, TX

HB1171 is an unnecessary interference into the rights and ability of an underage pregnant woman to determine whether to terminate her pregnancy. Minors already have great difficulty navigating the process for the termination of a pregnancy, and this only makes it more difficult. It would be an unconstitutional barrier to access abortion care of the most vulnerable young people in Texas. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that minors have the right to consent to an abortion and that any judicial bypass

procedure must be expeditious and confidential. As federal courts have already determined, there is no purpose or benefit to appointing a guardian for the fetus; the sole purpose of this legislation would be to politicize an issue that should be personal. Its effect will undoubtedly be to endanger more underage women who will not want to go through this difficult and intrusive procedure to exercise their right to terminate their pregnancy, and therefore pursue more dangerous options. Keep your laws and hands off pregnant women who are well capable of making these decisions regarding their own bodies, and focus on the real issues facing Texas citizens today.

Carol Rowley, Mrs.

Self

Denton, TX

This undermines the medical and legal confidentiality of a teenager, who, additionally, is being treated as less than a citizen of the State of Texas. Her wish to control her own uterus is being disregarded by Texas Legislators in too many ways, this HB 1171 being another example of abortion obsession on the part of some Legislators in response to political pressures. This tactic of providing legal representation for a fetus has been tried in other states and struck down as unconstitutional. This State Legislature is playing a game with its already-existing citizens lives, of which, apparently it is unconcerned with as well as ignorant of the circumstances which would cause a teenager to seek legal assistance for pregnancy termination. The Legislature has more pressing things to deal with than HB 1171. Drop it from consideration.

Julie Strother

Self

Houston, TX

HB1171 threatens the confidentiality of judicial bypass. Teens who seek abortion care could be subjected to higher risk. Alabama passed a similar bill in 2014, and a federal court found it to be unconstitutional. This bill violates young people's constitutional right to a confidential expedient bypass process. This bill would makes teens rights more dangerous , stigmatizing, and burdensome. This bill must be opposed based on my stated reasons. Every citizen deserves justice and freedom, and this bill infringes upon both.

Jordyn Cryer

Self

Savannah, TX

I, Jordyn Cryer am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

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The inquiry in a bypass case is narrowly tailored to whether the applicant is mature and informed enough to make this decision for themselves or whether notification and an attempt to get consent would not be in the applicant's best interest. There are no other factors for the court to consider, and so it is outside the scope of these hearings to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus. Furthermore, no competent, ethical attorney would consent to this appointment.

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For these reasons I Jordyn Cryer strongly opposes House Bill 1171. Thank you for your consideration

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Amy Harding
Self employed
AUSTIN, TX

I am emphatically opposed to HB 1171 as it threatens the confidentiality of judicial bypass and risks the safety of teens seeking abortion care.

A similar bill was passed in Alabama in 2014 and a federal court found it unconstitutional. HB 1171 violates young people's Constitutional right to a confidential, expeditious bypass process.

HB 1171 makes the judicial bypass process even more stigmatizing and burdensome for Texas teens, this bill is politically motivated and has no basis in medical/health science.

Katherine Parker
self, Social Worker
Austin, TX

I, Katherine Parker, am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings. Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

The judicial bypass process is intended to ensure that states do not create a parental veto to abortion access for young people under 18, which would be unconstitutional under the United States Supreme Court Case, *Belotti v. Baird*, 443 U.S. 622 (1979). The inquiry in a bypass case is narrowly tailored to whether the applicant is mature and informed enough to make this decision for themselves or whether notification and an attempt to get consent would not be in the applicant's best interest. There are no other factors for the court to consider, and so it is outside the scope of these hearings to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus. Furthermore, no competent, ethical attorney would consent to this appointment.

Appointing an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass hearing would have the effect of turning these hearings into adversarial procedures and further creates an undue burden on young people's access to abortion care. Young people need to have access to health care, information, and resources when they are faced with an important life decision – not barriers and delays. Instead of laws that hurt our families, we should invest in solutions that work for every young person, family, and community. A young person seeking an abortion needs compassionate support and access to health care, information, and services; not a trial-like adjudication. The judicial bypass process is onerous, can be traumatic for a young person, and causes additional and unnecessary delays. HB 1171 will only intensify these barriers.

For these reasons I strongly opposes House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration.

Taylor Taliaferro
University of Texas at Austin
Austin, TX

This bill is unconstitutional and places vulnerable young people in harm's way. ? Minors seeking a judicial bypass have a Constitutional guarantee of a confidential and expeditious judicial bypass process. Appointing an attorney ad litem for a fetus is in direct violation of both of these guarantees.

? Allowing the court to appoint an attorney ad litem for the fetus turns what is already an incredibly onerous procedure into an adversarial one.

Parental involvement laws disproportionately impact Texas' most marginalized youth. ? Young people of color, immigrant youth, LGBTQ+ youth, young people in foster care, and young people experiencing homelessness already face incredibly difficult and

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systemic burdens as they seek medical care. They are also the youth most likely to seek a judicial bypass.

This is an attempt to delay and stigmatize abortion care.

? Parental involvement laws delay access to healthcare for young people without having any clear impact on lowering abortion rates or encouraging minors to talk to their parents about their abortions.

? Young people in Texas need medically accurate sex education, access to reproductive health services including contraception and abortion, and the right to consent to their own care.

? Most young people already choose to involve a parent or guardian in their abortion decision, adding procedural burdens only serves to delay care for those that cannot involve a parent.

Allie Peacock, PhD

Self Mental health therapist

Houston, TX

Allowing the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus turns what is already an incredibly onerous procedure into an adversarial one, and should not be permitted.

Julie Crocker

Self, attorney

Fort Worth, TX

This bill is counter to the US Constitution and federal jurisprudence. Texas is going to spend millions of dollars defending this if it becomes a law. Money that could be better spent on preventing teenage pregnancy, child advocacy, or, heck, reforming our power grid.

I don't think any of you who will pass this crappy bill care about the pregnant children this impacts. No child (and everyone under 18 who is pregnant is a child) is ready to be a parent. It is criminal to make these children have another obstacle to cross when they have been traumatized already. Abortion is a tragedy every time. But so is abusing children. This bill sets up pregnant children to be abused by the system. Let's help them not get pregnant in the first place instead. Go after child abusers, distribute contraceptives, and help our kids. It is so clear this bill's purpose is merely to add another obstacle to this process for children who are already terrified. And to punish them more for what the author of the bill thinks is their immoral behavior.

Caroline Walsh

Self

Austin, TX

I, Caroline Walsh am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

The judicial bypass process is intended to ensure that states do not create a parental veto to abortion access for young people under 18, which would be unconstitutional under the United States Supreme Court Case, *Belotti v. Baird*, 443 U.S. 622 (1979).

The inquiry in a bypass case is narrowly tailored to whether the applicant is mature and informed enough to make this decision for themselves or whether notification and an attempt to get consent would not be in the applicant's best interest. There are no other factors for the court to consider, and so it is outside the scope of these hearings to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus. Furthermore, no competent, ethical attorney would consent to this appointment.

Appointing an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass hearing would have the effect of turning these hearings into adversarial procedures and further creates an undue burden on young people's access to abortion care.

Young people need to have access to health care, information, and resources when they are faced with an important life decision – not barriers and delays. Instead of laws that hurt our families, we should invest in solutions that work for every young person, family, and community. A young person seeking an abortion needs compassionate support and access to health care, information, and services; not a trial-like adjudication. The judicial bypass process is onerous, can be traumatic for a young person, and causes

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additional and unnecessary delays. HB 1171 will only intensify these barriers.
For these reasons, I strongly opposes House Bill 1171. Thank you for your consideration.

Katherine McGovern

self

Dallas, TX

I object to HB 1171 because:

- 1) it threatens the confidential of judicial bypass;
- 2) It risks the safety of teens seeking abortion care.
A similar bill was passed in Alabama in 2014 and a federal court found it unconstitutional.
- 3) HB 1171 violates young people's Constitutional right to a confidential, expeditious bypass process.
- 4) HB 1171 makes the judicial bypass process even more stigmatizing and burdensome for Texas teens.

Fundamentally, HB 1171 has no positive purpose for the benefit of teens seeking abortion care, a legal, medical procedure. The circumstances which bring a pregnant teen to need judicial bypass are significant and involve her safety and health.

Vote NO on HB 1171!

bhavik kumar

Self, physician

Houston, TX

I, Dr Bhavik Kumar, am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

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For these reasons I strongly opposes House Bill 1171. Thank you for your consideration.

Allison Teng

self, medical student

AUSTIN, TX

I, Allison Teng, am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or

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guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers.

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For these reasons I strongly opposes House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lora Wildenthal

self. professor.

Houston, TX

This is a frivolous, insulting bill. It is telling that abortion opponents tend to depict the uterus and fetus without the woman whose uterus and fetus it is.

Putting a fetus's legal rights on the same footing as the legal rights of a woman or girl truly reveals what is thought about women and girls.

Pitting a woman or girl against her fetus turns a woman's body into a battleground. It is not a battleground.

It is a woman's body, and she may carry the fetus to term. Or seek or require an abortion. Or she may miscarry. Things happen in women's lives.

Let's give every testicle a lawyer so we can make sure the man it belongs to is procreating or abstaining appropriately. And to harass him, because hey, why not.

I am sick of "public servants" whose mission is to ignore broad public opinion and waste our time with this mean-spirited stupidity.

If the sponsor of this bill is so worried about Texas children, it should be obvious that plenty of those children need help right now. Go help them then. You'll find that it is hard to help children when you are making war on their mothers.

Sam Gabbard

Self

Austin, TX

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There is no need for an attorney to represent something that cannot exist of its own volition. Forcing tax payers to pay for this, or the underage pregnant person ('s family) who likely cannot afford to properly take care of the baby much less to pay for an attorney attorney, is not acceptable. Who will then bear the cost of this fetus once they are alive? The state? The tax payers? Please consider using the funds to go back into the community and improve conditions so that people WANT to have children instead of being forced to do so. We do not need MORE unwanted people here, we need to take better care of the ones that already exist.

Chelsea Blakeburn
self, medical student

Houston, TX

I, Chelsea Blakeburn, am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

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For these reasons, I strongly opposes House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration.

S C Morian
Self, executive

Houston, TX

I, S C Morian, am writing to oppose HB 1171. A minor desiring an abortion is already under a terrible burden: abusive parents, the waiting period, medically inaccurate counseling, and lack of health care, among others. Adding an Attorney ad litem for the fetus would be unethical, not relevant, and unconstitutional.

Cathy Coleman
self/Realtor

Houston, TX

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I, Cathy Coleman write to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

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For these reasons I strongly opposes House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lauren DeGaetano

self/self-employed

Austin, TX

This bill is atrocious on many levels. I'm sure all of the men and few women that support or may vote for this archaic law are aware of the threat, damage and oppression it will create. This puts many teens at risk of improper self care or potential self harm. It is in direct violation of young people's Constitutional rights, their right to a confidential and expeditious bypass process. Vote NO on all anti- abortion bills. Abortion is health care. It is our right. It should be accessible for ALL! No one intends harm when seeking an abortion. It is always about the individual's best interest, who happens to be the potential parent. You discuss bills like this to do more harm than help and it's disgusting. Vote NO on all anti abortion bills today, for the health & safety of women and children.

Akhil Singh

self

Sugar Land, TX

I Akhil Singh am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

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For these reasons I Akhil Singh strongly oppose House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regina Dupree

self/retired

Dallas, TX

You are trying to create an unconstitutional barrier to access abortion care for the most vulnerable young women in Texas. If a young woman could involve a parent or guardian in this decision, they would-with this bill, you seek to delay care and the ultimate goal is to deny access to an abortion. I urge you to not pass HB 1171

Arielle Faith Matic

Self/Student

Corpus Christi, TX

I, Arielle Faith R. Matic am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

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Young people need to have access to health care, information, and resources when they are faced with an important life decision – not barriers and delays. Instead of laws that hurt our families, we should invest in solutions that work for every young person,

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family, and community. A young person seeking an abortion needs compassionate support and access to health care, information, and services; not a trial-like adjudication. The judicial bypass process is onerous, can be traumatic for a young person, and causes additional and unnecessary delays. HB 1171 will only intensify these barriers.

For these reasons, I strongly oppose House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration.

Piper Nelson, Ms.

self

Austin, TX

A young girl of 14 years old is raped, possibly by her father, her big brother, or her pastor. Through this most extreme violation of body, mind and spirit, she gets pregnant. With extremely good reason, she does not want to see this unwanted pregnancy to term. This bill would mandate that this minor - who has already been tortured by someone she trusts - must now undergo a court case wherein the fetus inside her - created out of a violent and unwanted act - has an attorney. This is gruesome and unjust. Let's work to ensure that minors are not violated, that men do not rape young girls, that everyone preaches and understands and listens to the concept of consent. Once have the simple issue of consent explained and put into practice across our great state, THEN we can worry about getting a ball of tissue some legal representation.

Lee Kuhl

Self - Teacher

Waco, TX

This legislation is simply attack on the constitutional right of bodily autonomy. Forcing an underage girl to go through pregnancy when it is her choice to get an abortion is abhorrent. This bill must not pass.

Leah Stolar

Self

Houston, TX

I am appalled and terrified on behalf of teenage girls seeking abortion by this ludicrous bill. This is an unconscionable infringement of an already "at risk" and scared teenage girl's rights and privacy. HB 1171 threatens the confidentiality of the judicial bypass procedure. It risks the safety of teens seeking abortion care. A similar bill was passed in Alabama in 2014 and a federal court found it unconstitutional. HB 1171 violates young people's Constitutional right to a confidential, expeditious bypass process. HB 1171 makes the judicial bypass process even more stigmatizing and burdensome for Texas teens. Put yourself in the head of a scared teenage girl who has just discovered that she's pregnant. This is not a humane, compassionate or civilized response.

Heather Carson, Dr.

Self- Attorney

Rosharon, TX

As a fetus is not a legal person they have no need for an ad litem to be appointed. Further encroaching on a minor's right to consent to abortion is morally and ethically wrong; the judicial bypass process is itself overly burdensome on a minor, particularly those in rural counties. This is simply an attempt to control women's bodies and restrict access to a safe medical procedure, when at the end of the day, nothing will be done to protect or provide for the child she is forced to bear. The mother will not be supported in continuing her education, in fact she is much more likely to be either removed from or drop out of school. If she is the victim of abuse or rape, she will not treated for mental health issues or be given any assistance to escape her abuser. In fact, her abuser or rapist can sue for parental rights and be allowed to use that child a pawn to torture her for the rest of

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her life. This is not about protecting women or children. This is about control.

Jennifer Zellner

Self - student

Austin, TX

It's absurd to think that a fetus need representation. A fetus is not a person. Medical science has repeatedly shown that, and I am concerned about the allowance of this representative's anti-science and illogical beliefs.

Texas is already considering a national laughing stock regarding the quality of our science education. As a state, we should not do more to prove that we deserve to be mocked.

Furthermore, a woman has a right to chose. Her body, her choice. Respect the First Amendment and keep religious bigotry out of our government.

Okky Lie

Self

Sugar Land, TX

I, Okky Bellina Lie, write on behalf of myself to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

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For these reasons, Okky Bellina Lie, strongly opposes House Bill 1171. Thank you for your consideration.

Jasmine Chan

self/medical student

Amarillo, TX

This bill threatens the safety and confidentiality of Texas women seeking judicial bypasses. This places an undue stress upon a woman already going through a very difficult process. The point of a judicial bypass is not a case between unborn child and pregnant woman. The point of a judicial bypass is to prove decision making capacity of a woman. There is no other point to this. There is no need for representation for an entity that is not represented in these proceedings. This is a waste of resources that could do towards providing healthcare and education to Texas citizens. Things we greatly need.

Elizabeth Rodriguez

self; medical assistant

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Pearland, TX

I, Elizabeth Rodriguez, am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

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For these reasons I strongly oppose House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration.
Elizabeth Rodriguez

Audrey Ference
self, instructional writer

AUSTIN, TX

This bill is disgusting and shameful. I hate that my state goes out of its way to deny women the agency to control their own bodies and fertility. I am a mother of two extremely beloved kiddos and it makes me sick to imagine someone being forced to give birth who doesn't want to. Access to reproductive care gave me the ability to choose how many children I wanted and when I wanted to have them and it absolutely fills me with rage and disgust that every person isn't given these same human rights. Reproductive care, INCLUDING ABORTIONS ON DEMAND, is vital healthcare that saves lives.

Heather Falvo, MD
self

Austin, TX

Medically, this is absurd. A fetus has no decision-making capability, therefore does not have any need for counsel. The pregnant female is the only decision making live being in this situation. I am appalled and disappointed by the consistent overreach of the TX state legislature in regards to abortion care. Abortion is a safe, legal medical procedure and there should be no government intrusion on the decision made between a pregnant human and her doctor. These bills are fully contrary to the idea of personal freedom and liberty. Please note that these bills never involve any penalty for the male involved in conception. It is scientifically a 50/50 contribution by the male and female in the process. Yet, this body consistently penalizes only the female for attempting to live a free, fair and unburdened life.

Caitlyn Clark

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self/student

Del Rio, TX

Thousands, if not millions, of minors who become pregnant need access to abortions for a variety of reasons, from emotional to financial to safety. Allowing the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem to represent a fetus is only another unnecessary barrier for a minor to be able to receive an abortion. To deny anyone of an abortion is highly unethical regardless of one's own personal beliefs. This bill is dangerous and should not even be considered.

Joyeux Simmons

Self / UTD Student

McKinney, TX

The judicial bypass process is a burden and barrier to abortion access for many young people under 18. Allowing the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus turns what is already an incredibly onerous procedure into an adversarial one, and should not be permitted. Everyday across America we see injustice against minorities in our court houses. Specifically, and most egregiously, against the black man. The majority of the time they are failed a proper lawyer, fair trial, or even having the opportunity to make it to one. It is our civil duty to give a voice and a fair statute of reason to the voiceless — the ones who are already here with us. Prioritizing this civil liberty to fetuses is a slap in the face to the millions of Americans who have fought for their right to these liberties and can stand by it.

Sanjana Ravi

self; medical student

Plano, TX

I, Sanjana Ravi am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

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Young people need to have access to health care, information, and resources when they are faced with an important life decision — not barriers and delays. Instead of laws that hurt our families, we should invest in solutions that work for every young person, family, and community. A young person seeking an abortion needs compassionate support and access to health care, information, and services; not a trial-like adjudication. The judicial bypass process is onerous, can be traumatic for a young person, and causes additional and unnecessary delays. HB 1171 will only intensify these barriers.

For these reasons I strongly oppose House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jose Ibarra

Self / UTA Student

McKinney, TX

I, Jose Ibarra, am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

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The judicial bypass process is intended to ensure that states do not create a parental veto to abortion access for young people under 18, which would be unconstitutional under the United States Supreme Court Case, *Belotti v. Baird*, 443 U.S. 622 (1979). The inquiry in a bypass case is narrowly tailored to whether the applicant is mature and informed enough to make this decision for themselves or whether notification and an attempt to get consent would not be in the applicant's best interest. There are no other factors for the court to consider, and so it is outside the scope of these hearings to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus.

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For these reasons I, Jose Ibarra, strongly opposes House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration.

Felix Bui

self - student

Grand Prairie, TX

I, Felix Bui, am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

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For these reasons I, Felix Bui, strongly opposes House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration.

Hanna Blaney

self, physician

BELTON, TX

This bill is utterly ridiculous and is clearly an attempt to limit access to abortion. How can an attorney (who has nothing to do with the mother or her decisions) represent a fetus inside another person's body? Please stop trying to limit women's rights. A bill that may actually help the issue of abortion would involve supporting mothers or providing healthcare/actual sex education to Texas women and girls.

Cindy Hu

self, medical student

Lubbock, TX

I do not support this bill. I believe women should have rights to their own body, and make choices as she sees fit for herself. No other "attorney or guardian" should have rights over another woman's body and choices.

Ashley Dao, Ms.

self, Student

Houston, TX

I, Ashley Dao am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings. Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers. The judicial bypass process is intended to ensure that states do not create a parental veto to abortion access for young people under 18, which would be unconstitutional under the United States Supreme Court Case, *Belotti v. Baird*, 443 U.S. 622 (1979). The inquiry in a bypass case is narrowly tailored to whether the applicant is mature and informed enough to make this decision for themselves or whether notification and an attempt to get consent would not be in the applicant's best interest. There are no other factors for the court to consider, and so it is outside the scope of these hearings to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus. Furthermore, no competent, ethical attorney would consent to this appointment. Appointing an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass hearing would have the effect of turning these hearings into adversarial procedures and further creates an undue burden on young people's access to abortion care. Young people need to have access to health care, information, and resources when they are faced with an important life decision – not barriers and delays. Instead of laws that hurt our families, we should invest in solutions that work for every young person, family, and community. A young person seeking an abortion needs compassionate support and access to health care, information, and services; not a trial-like adjudication. The judicial bypass process is onerous, can be traumatic for a young person, and causes additional and unnecessary delays. HB 1171 will only intensify these barriers. For these reasons I strongly oppose House Bill 1171. Thank you for your consideration.

Gabriella Garriga

Self, Researcher

SAN ANTONIO, TX

I, Gabriella Garriga am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

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For these reasons I strongly oppose House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration.

Pavi Wickramage

self, medical student

Plano, TX

I, Pavithra Wickramage, oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

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For these reasons, Pavi Wickramage, strongly opposes House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration.

Dalea Lugo

Self / TampPadParty

Houston, TX

I am AGAINST this bill due to the fact that pregnant teens would not reach out for adequate care. It would do more harm than good especially in cases of incest and other abuse cases.

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Natasha Kar

Self, student

Dallas, TX

I, Natasha, am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

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For these reasons I strongly opposes House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration.

Olivia Viscuso

self (medical student)

AUSTIN, TX

I, Olivia Viscuso, am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

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Roberto Rondero de Mosier

self

Austin, TX

As an attorney ad litem serving the interests of Jane I can unequivocally say that this is an unconstitutional law, but even if it were not, this is not well thought out. The idea that the government can assert itself into the "life" of anyone without their consent with the appointment of an ad litem in such a way is a slippery slope. The Ad Litem for an "unborn child" could only surmise as to desires of an "unborn child." The ad litem for the Jane's do their diligence to present a proper petition to the judge. There is so much wrong with this, but you're also inviting a lawsuit and costing the state millions in defense fees.

Riley Ruchti

self - student

Austin, TX

I, Riley Ruchti, am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings. Forced parental involvement laws and the judicial bypass process create real and significant barriers to abortion access for many young people. Permitting the court to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass case will add to and exacerbate those barriers. The judicial bypass process is intended to ensure that states do not create a parental veto to abortion access for young people under 18, which would be unconstitutional under the United States Supreme Court Case, *Belotti v. Baird*, 443 U.S. 622 (1979). The inquiry in a bypass case is narrowly tailored to whether the applicant is mature and informed enough to make this decision for themselves or whether notification and an attempt to get consent would not be in the applicant's best interest. There are no other factors for the court to consider, and so it is outside the scope of these hearings to appoint an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus. Furthermore, no competent, ethical attorney would consent to this appointment. Appointing an attorney or guardian ad litem for the fetus in a bypass hearing would have the effect of turning these hearings into adversarial procedures and further creates an undue burden on young people's access to abortion care.

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For these reasons [I or Org Name] strongly opposes House Bill 1171.

Thank you for your consideration.

Fariha Hossain

Self / consultant

Austin, TX

I, Fariha Hossain, am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

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For these reasons I strongly opposes House Bill 1171. Thank you for your consideration.

Sarah Leavengood

self

College Station, TX

The excruciatingly difficult process of choosing to terminate a pregnancy is ultimately only up to the pregnant person to complete on their own free will, without influence from other parties. A fetus does not need legal representation. This is so obviously an attempt to make legal, safe abortions more difficult for young Texans by using the authority of the court to intimidate and persuade individuals to make any choice but abortion. Raising a child is no easy task, and should not be forced upon those unwilling or unready to take on that responsibility with a heart full of love. Choosing to terminate a pregnancy is not a sin, but a decision made for the betterment of the pregnant individual for their mental, physical, and emotional health. Shame on anyone that votes to approve of the limiting health care those in need.

Cyndy Castillo

Self, student

Austin, TX

I, Cyndy Castillo, am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

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For these reasons I strongly opposes House Bill 1171. Thank you for your consideration.

Helen Schafer, Medical student

Self

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Austin, TX

Please do not pass this bill!!

This is an attempt to delay and stigmatize abortion care.

? Parental involvement laws delay access to healthcare for young people without having any clear impact on lowering abortion rates or encouraging minors to talk to their parents about their abortions.

? Young people in Texas need medically accurate sex education, access to reproductive health services including contraception and abortion, and the right to consent to their own care.

? Most young people already choose to involve a parent or guardian in their abortion decision, adding procedural burdens only serves to delay care for those that cannot involve a parent.

Luis Estrada, Mr.

Self

Rockwall, TX

Please allow women to have a choice in whether or not they have an abortion. It is their body and nobody else should restrict them from getting an abortion if they choose to have the procedure done.

Sangeetha Ranadeeve

Self, Student

Helotes, TX

I, Sangeetha Ranadeeve, am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

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Thank you for your consideration.

Kayona Moore

Self contact tracer

Cypress, TX

I, Kayona Moore am writing to oppose Texas House Bill 1171 relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to the fetus in judicial bypass hearings.

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For these reasons, I, Kayona Moore strongly opposes House Bill 1171.