

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HB 1291

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH

Hearing Date: April 14, 2021 8:00 AM

Thomas Harkins

Self/Lawyer

Fort Worth, TX

Many people, myself included, feel that abortion is the termination of a human life, albeit then living in the mother's womb. No one should be compelled to participate in what he believes is, in essence, murder, on pain of punishment by the State. Therefore, please support a bill giving a right to refuse to participate in an abortion procedure.

Judy Scoggins

Self

Frankston, TX

Please continue to represent the moral majority of citizens in East Texas. Thank you.

Ellen Klipp

self - retired school teacher

Cedar Park, TX

Every health care worker should be allowed to object and not participate in any part of any abortion procedure, no matter what health care facility or hospital they work for.

Ann Winer

Self

San Antonio, TX

The premise of this bill is that health care personnel are required to participate in D&E procedures. This is not true. All participating individuals have a choice to be there or not. Having worked in a multitude of hospitals that very occasionally performed this surgery, all of us were asked our choice of whether to participate, or not.

Sylvia NEUSCH

True Life

ROUND ROCK, TX

Please vote for the right to object! Thank you!

Anne Newman

self

BOERNE, TX

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Please support this bill.

Courtney Gilmore

Self

Jonesboro, TX

I support this bill. I support freedom for any healthcare provider to opt out of procedures they feel are morally wrong

Cassandra Lydon

Self, paramedic

Austin, TX

If you don't want to provide certain types of medical care, then don't go into the medical field. The first directive in medicine is do no harm, abortion care is healthcare, abortion care can save the life of the mother. Don't push your morals on others. If you don't want to participate then don't work at a facility that provides abortions.

Kenneth Aitken, Mr

Self Retired

Friendswood, TX

Oppose!

Reyna Johnson

Self

Longview, TX

I believe our Constitution should be upheld especially in regards to the sanctity of life and liberty with the pursuit of freedom. This is what makes America Great.

Carol Smith

Self/Interior Design

Georgetown, TX

Vote YES to the right to OBJECT!

Robert Santini

Republican Party of Texas

San Antonio, TX

Healthcare workers have a constitutional right to refuse to participate in abortions without fear of retaliation or losing their jobs. I support this bill.

Rebekah Adams

Self

McKinney, TX

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Dear committee members, I urge you to bring HB 1291 to a hearing and vote it out of committee. Health care workers desperately need freedom of conscience to object to participation in abortion procedures. Forcing them into a situation of choosing between a deeply-held belief and their job is terrible. This is America!

Heather FitzGerald

Self

Azle, TX

I support people's right of conscience and conviction to abstain from being a part of this procedure. This should not be something anyone is forced to cooperate in against their will.

Kara Trissel

self

Jonestown, TX

Please protect the rights of our healthcare workers by supporting HB1291. Thank you.

Anna Valdivia

Self/hairstylist

Temple, TX

I say NO to the abortion madness!

Lucy Tuck

Self

Naples, TX

Please vote to allow doctors to follow their conscience in any medical procedures they are to perform

Hannah Hughes

Texas Rising

San Antonio, TX

When any person enters the healthcare field and becomes a health care professional they are expected to uphold the needs of the individuals they are serving. The idea of allowing these professionals the leeway to compromise their care for a patient is not only unethical but also unconstitutional!

My personal rights need to be respected and upheld, especially in a medical setting. My body is not something for one to compromise or ignore. To allow this bill to pass will only hurt the bodily autonomy of many Texans and result in folks going to unsafe 'professionals' to get the treatment they need.

Toni Fabry

Self

Tyler, TX

As a retired RN I am writing to express support of HB 1291 . I feel that medical professional should never be put in a position of

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participation in an abortion procedure due to their religious beliefs and practices. As a Catholic and pro-life individual I was often placed in positions in which I was expected to participate in said procedures and I found it extremely upsetting. Examples of said procures would be D & C's in which the remains of aborted fetal material were scrapped from the mothers uterus. I also worked with an insurance carrier who provided coverage for abortion procedures which required review and approval by nurse reviewers in their Pre-certification department. When I received an abortion for review I would often find another nurse who had no issue with these procedures ,she in turn would carry through with the appropriate review. There should be protections in place for those of us who through religious beliefs are opposed to abortion procedures. Please pass this bill out of committee Thank-you

Harold Felter, Dr

Self, Physician

Corpus Christi, TX

Protect conscious rights

Beverly Roberts, Mrs.

Texas Values

Houston, TX

Doctors regularly decline to do certain surgeries for many reasons, having nothing to do with religious beliefs. Declining to do a procedure because of their religious beliefs should not even be a factor. They should be able to decline for ANY reason or for NO reason.

Lisa Rutledge

Self

Spring, TX

No one should be forced to perform an act against their will.

Elise Krentzel

Kumi Consulting & Co.

Austin, TX

No one is ever going to perform an abortion without the consent of the woman or girl. The hospital or health care personnel should NOT be allowed to object. They shouldn't be allowed to be part of any medical staff if they allow their personal or religious belief to get in the way of a medical procedure that is the RIGHT of any girl or woman.

Amy Rigall

self - teacher

Lake Dallas, TX

This right of conscience for something not only considered a personal moral choice, but actively understood to be participation in murder by many is very important and I urge you to protect this freedom of conscience for health care professionals. This is not a matter of discrimination against a person involved, but against a practice and procedure that actively kills a pre-born child. Thank you for hearing my concern.

Adam Werner

Self - educator

Fort Worth, TX

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I am in opposition of passing this bill as it would open the door for health care providers to withhold necessary care due to arbitrary choices based on the provider's own definitions of morality and therefore endangers patients.

Joan Tomlinson

self-- retired Speech & Language Pathologist- University Assistant prof.-Special Educator, etc.

Conroe, TX

I write you in support of 1424HB by Rep. Oliverson. I join with millions of Americans convinced that the Oath of Hippocrates must be upheld for the good of patients and for the sacred right of the doctor himself or herself. Failure of our government to honor the right of a doctor's conscience amounts to enslavement of all dedicating their lives to medicine. There is an irrefutable truth that the forced killing of babies in itself has a horrendous effect upon a vast number of men and women with consciences. There are even veterinarians who suffer when there is no choice but to take the life of a little dog. My own very special family doctor, throughout his entire lifetime and many of my own 90 years of life, took great effort to avoid causing lengthy pain even to the fish he caught. We, his patients loved him, trusted him and were comforted even by his presence.

If for no other reason, I beg of you to pass 1424 HB to honor the Judea- Christian devotion of our men and women who give their lives to medicine while believing "Thou shall do no murder." Failing by our government to do so-- failing to allow them the actions dedicated by their consciences, places American law and American medicine on the hideous organ harvesting level of China--and makes money more important than God.

Richard B Swint

Swint Ent

Paris, TX

Ancient concepts of ethical concepts of the dignity of human life are violated when you kill a person. A recent implantation and birth of a health human with a many years old stored embryo prove the concept of life starts with conception.

David Welch, Rev.

Texas Pastor Council

Houston, TX

The fact that an abortion is the intentional and violent taking of the life of a person without due process of law in the most helpless position that person will ever be in, the mother's womb, is a violation of the Hippocratic Oath and to the religious and/or moral convictions of many medical professionals. No such person should be forced to participate in this procedure and should be protected as such by law against any punitive measures by employers.

Shelley McCarty

Self homemaker

Aledo, TX

Under the United States Constitution every person has a right to object to murdering children through abortion.

Jeffrey McCarty

TMJ Diagnostics

Aledo, TX

Every health care worker should have the right to object to the murderous act of abortion.

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Susanne Rothschild

Self

Houston, TX

I support the right to object to participation in an abortion procedure for health care personnel of a hospital or health care facility. No one should be required to participate in actions that are against their moral code and personal values.

Merri Michaels

Adult Education

Houston, TX

I support the right to object to participation in an abortion procedure for health care personnel of a hospital or health care facility. Facilities must be required to inform personnel of this right and must be prohibited from discriminating against personnel for objecting. I request and expect my legislators to support HB 1291 filed by Keith Bell.

Rexine H

none

San Marcos, TX

I support this bill.

Adri Perez

ACLU of Texas

El Paso, TX

We write on behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union Foundation of Texas to express serious concerns about House Bill 1291 and ask that you oppose this bill.

HB 1291 is superfluous legislation in search of a problem that doesn't exist. The bill requires that a hospital provide written notice to its providers of their existing right to object to abortion procedures. However, what the bill does not make clear is that only a tiny fraction of abortions are performed in hospitals, so a scenario in which a provider could even utilize the information in the written notice this bill would require is incredibly rare. It can reasonably be concluded that this bill is only intended to further stigmatize abortion care by requiring hospitals and health care providers go out of their way to clarify that they are not required to participate in an abortion procedure- most of which will never be in that situation in the first place. This bill would just create further unnecessary red tape for hospitals and health care providers.

Moreover, the law in Texas already protects a physicians' right to object to these procedures -- no one is forcing anyone to provide abortions in Texas. Chapter 103 of the Texas Occupations code, subtly titled "Right to object to participation in an abortion procedure" has been in place since 1999. In fact, those who wish to provide abortion care have to affirmatively seek out the required special training. This bill does not do anything to benefit the lives of Texans, but instead burdens hospitals -- creating yet another form for them to keep track of.

The bill only further stigmatizes abortion care and is clearly an attempt to single out this care and further deter providers from performing or receiving training on essential healthcare procedures. This will ultimately have a disproportionate impact on low income people, people of color and rural folks who may not be able to find another doctor willing to provide them care.

Instead of spending all of this time stigmatizing abortion care as a distraction from the issues that truly affect Texans, we should instead be focused on the multiple overlapping, and ongoing crises facing our beautiful state. Just yesterday, I received an alert that ERCOT might be on the verge of fail yet again and just yesterday, Texas was still 6th in new cases and 4th in new deaths from the COVID-19 pandemic that is still ravaging our community. We need to stop creating unnecessary regulations and

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requirements for notices on laws that have existed for over 3/4ths of my life. We can do better and instead focus on the real problems facing Texans every day.

Natalie Kinard

Self

Kyle, TX

No health care professional should stay employed who objects to ANY basic medical procedure. They should instead be disbarred by their overseeing board. This motion is illegal and harms only those Texans in most need. Focus your efforts instead on ensuring easy access to birth control, educating boys on their responsibility in the contraceptive process, and educating all children from kindergarten up in age-appropriate health and sexual education.

Michele Thompson

self, retired

Austin, TX

Pass HB 1291. Individuals must be protected from being required to participate in an abortion. Thank you.

Ruth York

Tea Party Patriots of Eastland County, Texas Family Defense Committee, and myself (Direct Sales)

Cisco, TX

I support HB 1291 because persons should be able to learn/practice their profession without compromising their conscience. These decisions in the medical field may well involve decisions of life and death, and prohibiting the free exercise of conscience would drive many talented individuals from their preferred profession. Please support HB 1291.

Kathy Turner

self, retired

McGregor, TX

I strongly support this bill and urge you to report it favorably out of committee. Health care personnel should not be subject to discrimination based on their religious beliefs at their job. There is no compelling state interest in denying the right to object to participation in an abortion. Thank you.

Carolyn Lux

Self

Fredericksburg, TX

I am in favor of passing this bill. Health care providers should be able to practice according to their principles and/or religious values. Please pass this Bill.

Thank you.

Frank Holman

Self

Austin, TX

I support HB 1291. My father was a Doctor. As a child growing up in the 60s I can remember my father saying he gave the hospital where he was employed that he had given them notice that he would not participate in the act of an abortion. Abortion goes against the Hippocratic Oath and the belief for the Christian and other religious belief systems. The Bible and the Constitution of the United States states that we have Unalienable Rights. Please vote to send this Bill to the House Floor.

Lauren Womack
self Project Manager

Plano, TX

I am opposed to this bill. Jobs in the medical field require all practitioners to treat all people with dignity and respect, including respect for their medical choices.

Getting between women and their healthcare is nothing short of diabolical.

Jessica Nemergut

Self

The Colony, TX

I am against this bill.

Diana Richards

Self / Volunteer

Sherman, TX

As a Native Texan and mother, I am FOR HB1291. Please pass it favorably out of Committee for a vote by the full House.

Martina Sutton

self

Cedar Park, TX

I am AGAINST this bill as written.

The purpose of a health care provider is to provide care, particularly life-saving care, to a patient. This bill is written such that a health care provider can object whether participation is direct or indirect performance or participation. That means a health care provider could object to providing post-op care to help prevent complications and even death of the patient. Or a health care provider could object to readying medical supplies or medications for pre-op or post-op care. This would be medical supplies and medications that help make the procedure safe for the woman and there ARE cases where abortion is necessary to save the life of a woman. Objecting to doing even these kinds of jobs would violate the very purpose of providing life-saving health care that I stated earlier.

Keena Miller

self/education

Austin, TX

OPPOSE

Neesha Dave

The Lilith Fund for Reproductive Equity

Austin, TX

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We oppose HB 1291. HB 1291 would require hospitals to provide written notice to providers of their right to object to abortion procedures. Physicians already have the right to object to these procedures and those who wish to provide abortion care have to affirmatively seek out the required training. Bills like these have no purpose but to further stigmatize abortions and deter providers from performing or receiving training on essential health care procedures.

Kathryn Woehler, Mrs.

Self, Retired LVN, BSN, MPH (degrees and practice all in Texas)

San Antonio, TX

Dear Chair Klick and Members of the House Committee on Public Health,

I have worked in several health care professions for 50 years. In the state of Texas, I have experienced too many instances in which I saw Medical Residents, Doctors, and nurses involved in procedures that violated at least my conscience and also theirs. Can you say, "Nursing Homes" or "County Hospital" or "Rural Texas" (places where no one pays close attention)?

Have you ever read the full Hippocratic Oath?

"I SWEAR by Apollo the physician and AEsculapius, and Health, and All-heal, and all the gods and goddesses, that, according to my ability and judgment, I will keep this Oath and this stipulation -- to reckon him who taught me this Art equally dear to me as my parents, to share my substance with him, and relieve his necessities if required; to look upon his offspring in the same footing as my own brothers, and to teach them this art, if they shall wish to learn it, without fee or stipulation; and that by precept, lecture, and every other mode of instruction, I will impart a knowledge of the Art to my own sons, and those of my teachers, and to disciples bound by a stipulation and oath according to the law of medicine, but to none others. I will follow that system of regimen which, according to my ability and judgement, I consider for the benefit of my patients, and abstain from whatever is deleterious and mischievous. I will give no deadly medicine to any one if asked, nor suggest any such counsel; and in like manner I will not give to a woman a pessary to produce abortion. With purity and with holiness I will pass my life and practice my Art. I will not cut persons labouring under the stone, but will leave this to be done by men who are practitioners of this work. Into whatever houses I enter, I will go into them for the benefit of the sick, and will abstain from every voluntary act of mischief and corruption; and, further, from the seduction of females or males, of freemen and slaves. Whatever, in connection with my professional service, or not in connection with it, I see or hear, in the life of men, which ought not to be spoken of abroad, I will not divulge, as reckoning that all such should be kept secret. While I continue to keep this Oath unviolated, may it be granted to me to enjoy life and the practice of the art, respected by all men, in all times. But should I trespass and violate this Oath, may the reverse be my lot." Source: "Harvard Classics Volume 38" Copyright 1910 by P.F. Collier and Son.

You must SUPPORT HB 1424 by Rep. Oliverson to protect Health Care professionals from COERCIONS that violate their conscience. HB 1424 is in the very best interest of patients.

HB 1424 empowers physicians and all health care professionals to uphold the strong foundations of the Hippocratic tradition that puts patients first.

Bureaucrats and government officials must NEVER be able to override medical decisions.

Kathryn S. Woehler, BSN, MPH

Kathryn Woehler, Mrs.

Self, LVN, BSN, MPH

San Antonio, TX

Dear Chair Klick and Members of the House Committee on Public Health,

I have worked in several health care professions for 50 years. In the state of Texas, I have experienced too many instances in which I saw Medical Residents, Doctors, and nurses involved in MEDICAL PROCEDURES that violated at least my conscience and also theirs. I have heard Attending Medical Residents arguing and then severing fallopian tubes on an unconscious patient without her permission; an incident in which a "prudent nurse" could NOT LEAVE HER PATIENT. I have been in the room

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when a teenager was being delivered of a full-term infant and heard the baby's cry before the neck was broken. Sometimes we can knowingly refuse to participate in procedures against our personal moral choices. Sometimes we just get roped in unwittingly. At least this bill will empower us to decide when we know what we're getting into.

Can you say, "County Hospital" or "Rural Texas" (places where no one pays close attention)?

You must SUPPORT HB 1291 by Rep. Bell to protect Health Care professionals from COERCIONS that violate their conscience. Bureaucrats and government officials must NEVER be able to override personal moral decisions.

Kathryn S. Woehler, BSN, MPH