

Safeguarding Reproductive Health Care for All

Written by Jeff Smith, State Senator District 31
Wednesday, 15 November 2023 09:07 -

<http://newiproggressive.com/images/stories/S5/womens-health2-s449.jpg>



Senator Smith writes about the urgent need to remove politics from the equation and leave reproductive health care choices up to each individual.

MADISON - Since the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) passed their ruling reversing *Roe v. Wade* in 2022, doctors and women have been treated like criminals for providing and accessing reproductive health services. In Wisconsin, a controversial law passed way back in 1849 went back into effect, with devastating impacts on our state.

This provoked a groundswell of opposition across Wisconsin. Recent election results, not only in Wisconsin but across the country, have made it clear that women will not be pushed aside. Local areas have passed non-binding referendums in support of abortion rights.



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Governments shouldn't decide if women decide to have children. Here in the State Senate, my Democratic colleagues and I attempted to get a statewide advisory referendum on the ballot to ask voters whether the 1849 ban should be repealed, but Republicans blocked it. They don't want to hear from their constituents that they're doing the wrong thing.

But we haven't given up on your rights. A recently-unveiled package of three bills, authored by my colleagues Senator Kelda Roys (D-Madison) and Representative Francesca Hong (D-Madison), would restore the power of individuals to make their own pregnancy decisions.

The first of these, **LRB-4729**, would repeal many of the stringent requirements which have been placed on abortion procedures which make it more difficult for those seeking reproductive health care.



The current prohibition against prescribing medication abortion via telehealth is one such restriction. Drugs such as mifepristone are prescription medications shown to be safe and effective in the first ten weeks of a pregnancy.

In the wake of the pandemic we've successfully implemented telehealth services, but currently this safe, effective medication can only be prescribed in person. This legislation would give pregnant people the option to consult with a doctor via telehealth and pick up their prescription from the pharmacy.

It adds abortion services to insurance coverage, removes mandatory parental involvement and striking the requirement for doctors providing an abortion to have admitting privileges at a hospital at least 30 miles away. (The admitting privileges requirement is based on faulty

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information regarding the risks of abortion procedures, and has been held unconstitutional by the courts.)

There are many facilities out there, funded by public dollars, offering so-called “pregnancy counseling services.” These facilities represent themselves as legitimate medical clinics, providing pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, counseling and resources, but rarely if ever suggest abortion as an option.



But many of these facilities omit information or even provide false information to patients. Their real aim is to prevent people who are pregnant from accessing abortion in a timely manner while promoting an abstinence-only approach to contraception.

Some groups falsely claim, for example, that condoms are ineffective or that hormonal birth control has dangerous side effects. Sometimes these organizations use manipulative tactics to get pregnant people to delay real counseling or medical care until it's too late for a legal abortion.

The current Wisconsin law allowing for these practices undermines the doctor-patient relationship and informed consent process by controlling the information doctors can provide to patients. This harms patients and undermines trust in our health care system.

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