



Michigan National Organization for Women

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Honorable Rick Jones, Chair
Senate Judiciary Committee
915 Farnum Building
Lansing, MI

Dear Senators Jones, Schuitmaker, Rocca, and Bieda

The Michigan National Organization for Women **opposes HB 4798, 4799, 5134, and 5182** because the bills duplicate laws already in place to require doctors to screen for domestic violence and take appropriate action to protect patients. Additionally, if the bills were really meant to protect from women from a crime, they would do so by protecting them from both coercion to abort a fetus and coercion to carry an unwanted pregnancy to term. Therefore the bills are not a neutral protection of all women's reproductive rights but serve as yet another form of harassment of abortion providers and women seeking abortions. The bills set up harassing procedures to intimidate women into not choosing an abortion. In short, these bills that pretend to protect women against coercion are themselves coercive.

Moreover these bills add to the growing evidence that this Legislature does not really want to prevent abortions. If you want to prevent abortions, you would be having hearings on the pregnancy prevention bills instead of creating a law that duplicates other laws. About half of pregnancies are unintended. One out of three women will have an abortion in her lifetime. If you want to reduce this number you need to require contraceptive coverage in all insurance sold in Michigan. You need to require age-appropriate, comprehensive sex education in the schools. You need to require pharmacists to fill birth control prescriptions. You need to require emergency rooms to provide emergency birth control to rape victims. You need to fully fund public health initiatives to prevent unintended pregnancies. You need to regulate the crisis pregnancy centers to require full disclosure that they do not provide unbiased information about abortion and abortion alternatives. With all due respect, these measures would prevent more abortions than new laws about coerced abortion.

Women seeking an abortion expect their doctors to be concerned about their health and well-being, not an advocate for anti-abortion zealots. Simply put, these bills over-regulate abortion providers and harass pregnant women seeking an abortion into carrying a pregnancy to term. They deserve to be defeated.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Mary Pollock
Legislative Vice President

NOW's purpose is to take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men.