



NARAL
Pro-Choice America

April 21, 2017

The Honorable Terry Branstad
Governor
State Capitol
1007 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50319

Dear Governor Branstad:

I am writing on behalf of the women of Iowa and Americans across the country who believe in the fundamental value of a woman's right to safe, legal abortion—to urge you to veto the outrageous anti-abortion bill S.B. 471. This bill has numerous provisions that undermine women's health, but I will focus on three of the most egregious sections below.

S.B. 471 imposes several requirements that serve no purpose other than to shame women for choosing abortion care, make it more difficult for women in Iowa to get abortion services, and make providers complicit in that shaming by way of biased-counseling requirements. Currently, Iowa has no mandatory delay between the time a woman enters a provider's office and when she can get abortion care. This bill eliminates that standard and instead, replaces it with a 72-hour mandatory delay—forcing women to make two separate, in-person trips. This legislation will add Iowa to the short list of states with the longest period of forced delay in the country. Mandatory delays such as these impose additional burdens on women, especially women in rural areas who often have to travel for many hours to get health care. Already, 85 percent of Iowa counties have no abortion provider. This bill makes an already acute abortion-access problem even worse.

Additionally, this legislation forces providers to perform an ultrasound on any woman seeking abortion care, even when it is not medically necessary. While an ultrasound can be an important tool for doctors when used for medical reasons, no procedure should be used to coerce or harass a patient—and S.B. 471 does just that, since an ultrasound is not medically necessary for most women seeking abortion services. A doctor, in consultation with his or her patient, should make this recommendation, not politicians. Additionally, this bill requires doctors to describe the fetus to the woman, describe the ultrasound image, and give the woman misleading or medically inaccurate information about abortion.

As if those provisions aren't bad enough for the women of Iowa, S.B. 471 outlaws abortion care after 20 weeks with no exception for rape, incest, or cases of fetal anomaly. It includes only the most restrictive exceptions for a woman's health—requiring that she be at death's door to qualify for the exception—making a woman's life a political gamble for medical providers. In addition to being incredibly callous, this proposal also is patently unconstitutional. NARAL Pro-Choice America supports the legal

framework established in *Roe v. Wade* and does not oppose restrictions on post-viability abortion care as long as they have adequate exceptions to protect the woman's life and health. This legislation, however, ignores both those constitutional standards and the realities of women's medical needs. Put simply, sometimes, wanted pregnancies encounter tragic circumstances.

This legislation truly is one of the most severe and dangerous proposals in the entire country. Even more sickening is that anti-choice legislators have been fighting over how to make it worse. And to add to the bill's severity, making the bill go into effect immediately upon enactment makes clear just how anti-choice legislators feel about a woman's right to bodily autonomy. If signed, this bill will almost certainly be challenged in court and will require tens of thousands of taxpayers' dollars to be spent on needless litigation. While I may not be able to appeal to your sensibilities on the merits of protecting a woman's right to make personal and private medical decisions, might I appeal to your values of fiscal conservatism and small government philosophy? I urge you again: please veto this bill.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ilyse G. Hogue". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ilyse G. Hogue
President