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‰ Maya Smith  
Senate Health and Welfare Committee  
Vermont Legislature

Dear Members of the Senate Health and Welfare Committee,

I am writing to express my concern over the proposed legislation H.57. I am speaking both as a concerned citizen and an experienced physician and scientist. It is imperative that all legislation addressing health care issues be safe, informed, and in the best interests of the population. This legislation falls short in all three categories.

First, in the introduction sentence dealing with the intent of the bill, it states that there is currently no restriction on access to abortion in the state of Vermont, which immediately begs the question “why is this bill necessary?”. It would seem that this is redundant legislation designed to counteract perceived threats on a national level to abortion access. The problem with this strategy is that, aside from being unnecessary, it allows wide ranging and unregulated access to abortion in all forms and at all stages of gestational development. This is overreaching and unsafe. One of the primary arguments for legalized abortion in this country is to ensure safe access for all women. This bill specifically states that ANYONE can perform their own abortion without fear of repercussion. [cf. 9494(b)] We have already seen confirmed cases of abuse and misuse of abortion services elsewhere in the country leading to horrible and gruesome atrocities against infants as well as unsafe standards for women. This bill seems to ignore the known facts that unrestricted abortion access is unsafe.

Second, the goal of this bill as stated is to ensure access to abortion at all stages of pregnancy and fetal development. This is in direct opposition to the scientific data proving that a fetus is capable of experiencing pain at a certain gestational age and beyond. It is very likely that ongoing research and scientific developments will further validate this finding and very well could provide more evidence for the essential need to limit abortion to earlier stages of gestation. Thus it is premature and misguided to pass legislation that would allow unfettered access to abortion at all stages of fetal development.

Finally, abortion kills humans. It is certainly not in the best interest of the fetus, the most vulnerable member of the population, for women to have unrestricted access to abortion for any reason. This is particularly true in minority populations such as African Americans, where the widely documented percentage of abortions is 25% of pregnancies. We should be focusing on growing and helping our minority communities to thrive, not limiting its growth and potential by ending upwards of 25% of its future population.

This legislation is unsafe, misinformed, and not in the best interest of the population. It would be a far wiser use of the House's time and resources to explore legislation that reduces the (perceived) NEED for abortion, rather than increasing its availability and employment.

Thank you for considering these comments and please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss them further.

Respectfully,  
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Family Physician  
Newport, VT