

Testimony in Opposition to SB 1243
Mistie Tolman (Legislative Director, Planned Parenthood Votes)
February 12, 2018

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, my name is Mistie Tolman and I am the Legislative Director for Planned Parenthood Votes in Idaho. We stand today to oppose Senate Bill 1243.

Planned Parenthood provides high-quality, evidence-based health care. At Planned Parenthood, we work every day to make sure every woman has a safe, compassionate, respectful experience. The abortion care we provide our patients includes medically accurate, unbiased counseling about all options available, including parenting, adoption, and abortion. We provide the support and information that women need to make the informed decision that is best for them.

The health care providers at Planned Parenthood and other providers follow rigorous medical standards and guidelines. These standards are developed using the most current medical evidence available, including guidance from trusted medical organizations such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the United States Preventive Services Task Force, and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Senate Bill 1243 interferes with providers' ability to use their professional skill and judgment to provide patients with information that is medically and scientifically accurate in order to protect and advance their health.

Everybody deserves accurate, comprehensive information and appropriate medical care. A woman should have accurate information about all of her options, and this information should support a woman, help her make a decision for herself, and enable her to take care of her and her family's health and well-being. This bill does nothing to ensure access to this information or to protect women's health.

Instead, it would require physicians to tell a patient where they can obtain assistance in locating a health care provider with whom they can consult about reversing a medication abortion, an unproven procedure with no basis in science.

There is no medical or scientific evidence to demonstrate that reversing a medication abortion is possible. And because there have been no clinical trials to produce objective or credible data, this has not been tested for safety, effectiveness, or the likelihood of side effects. This bill would effectively make women unwilling research subjects of an uncontrolled experiment and put their health at risk. The end result of this bill will be forcing licensed health care providers to refer women to misleading and inadequate information, when what they really need access to is safe, evidence-based medical care.

What's more, this bill would require the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare to publish printed material and a website to provide this so-called information. Instead of requiring the state to spend scarce resources promoting make-believe medicine, the legislature should focus on measures that actually improve access to health care and reduce the need for abortion in the first place.

Women deserve high-quality, compassionate, and medically sound health care from trained professionals – not misinformation from politicians. This bill is yet another attempt to interfere with decisions made by a woman in consultation with her health care provider, with no regard for her health. We urge the legislature to focus on ensuring that all women have access to evidence-based health care rather than inserting itself into the exam room.

Thank you.