

SUPPORT HB 1797

REPEAL HARMFUL BARRIERS TO REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE FOR YOUTH

Sponsors:

Moeller–Welch–Cassidy–Mayfield, Croke, Harris, Hirschauer, Morgan, Lilly, Guzzardi, Conroy, LaPointe, Williams, Mason, Ammons, Gabel, Gong-Gershowitz, Guerrero-Cuellar, Didech

HB 1797 repeals the Parental Notice of Abortion Act (PNA), which requires a healthcare provider to notify an adult family member (parent, grandparent, step-parent living in the home, or legal guardian) at least 48 hours prior to performing an abortion for a patient under 18. The law creates a judicial bypass for those who cannot notify an adult family member. **Decades of research and experience demonstrate that forced parental involvement laws like this hurt young people and serve no valid purpose.**

Healthy family communication cannot be legislated: We all want young people to be able to talk to their parents about important life decisions. However, the idea that the government can force healthy family interactions ignores reality for many youth and the lasting injuries that result from enforcing these laws.

- The majority of young people voluntarily tell a parent about an unplanned pregnancy – and the younger a minor, the more likely they are to involve a parent. Those who do not tell a parent often involve another family member or trusted adult.
- The minority of young people who do not talk to their parents often have concerns such as: fear of physical or emotional abuse, loss of financial support, or homelessness; fear of being forced to give birth against their will; or serious family problems such as a parent who is sick or imprisoned.

The judicial bypass process itself harms young people:

The “judicial bypass” alternative to parental notice – where a young person must ask a judge for permission to have an abortion without notifying a parent – compounds the harms for young people.

- Youth face major logistical hurdles accessing a judicial bypass – such as getting away from school or home during business hours without raising suspicion, and travelling to and from a courthouse.
- Young people are understandably distressed by being required to go to court and to tell the most intimate details of their life to a stranger.

The judicial bypass process serves no purpose: Since the law went into effect in 2013, judges granted more than 99.5 percent of bypass requests throughout Illinois because they believed the young people were mature enough to make this decision independently, in consultation with their health care providers and chosen support systems.

These harmful restrictions are irrational: Research shows young people are capable of making informed decisions about pregnancy. Illinois law recognizes this by permitting pregnant minors to make all other medical decisions – even those involving greater risk than a safe, legal abortion – without involving a parent or going to court. A pregnant minor can decide independently whether to continue the pregnancy and give birth, consent to far riskier medical care such as a cesarean section, or place a child for adoption. Only when a young person decides to end their pregnancy does the government force them to involve their family.

Every leading medical organization opposes forced parental involvement laws, including: The American Medical Association; The American Academy of Pediatrics; The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; The Society for Adolescent Medicine; and The American Public Health Association.

Supporting Organizations

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

ACLU of Illinois

AIDS Foundation of Chicago

American Association of University Women

Apna Ghar, Inc. (Our Home)

Catholics for Choice

Chicago Abortion Fund

Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation

Chicago Democratic Socialists of America

Chicago Foundation for Women

Chicago NOW

Chicago Votes

Citizen Action Illinois

Coalition for a Better Illinois 6th

Democratic Women of McDonough County

Equality Illinois

EverThrive Illinois

Family Planning Associates

Friends Who March

Health and Medicine Policy Research Group

Hope Clinic for Women

Human Rights Watch Chicago

Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health

Illinois Choice Action Team

Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault

Illinois Democratic Women

Illinois Handmaids

Illinois NOW

Indivisible Illinois

League of Women Voters Illinois

Life Span

Mainstream Republican Committee

McHenry County Citizens for Choice

McHenry NOW

Midwest Access Coalition

Midwest Access Project

Men4Choice

Mujeres Latinas en Accion

NARAL Pro-Choice America

National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum

National Association of Social Workers Illinois Chapter

National Council of Jewish Women Illinois

North & NW Suburban NOW

Personal PAC

Planned Parenthood of Illinois

Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis Region and Southwest Missouri

Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

Reproductive Health Access Project – Illinois Cluster

Resilience

Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law

She Votes Illinois

Sierra Club Illinois

The Network: Advocating Against Domestic Violence

Vote Mama

Whole Woman's Health

Whole Woman's Health Alliance

Winnebago County Citizens for Choice

Women's March Chicago

Women's March Illinois

Zioness Chicago Chapter

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