

Parental-notification bill is about stopping abortion by making it more difficult

I am the mother of two daughters, ages 9 and 4. I testified in opposition to House Bill 1329, the parental-notification bill, in the House State Affairs Committee. This bill would terminate my parental right to give my daughters the medical confidentiality, where abortion is concerned, that they currently have. That is essential if I am to meet my parental obligation of assuring that medical care is safe for my daughters, whether they choose it or I do.

This law will not make a scared girl tell anyone about a pregnancy before a more dangerous second-trimester abortion is the option or until abortion is no longer an option, forcing her to have a child she didn't want and isn't prepared to parent. This law will not stop a desperate girl from circumventing it, judicial waiver included, by

choosing to self abort or to seek back-alley medical care.

I am one of those parents that Rep. Linda Anderson says wants to be involved in her daughter's decision about abortion. Yet if this attempt to legislate that decision would give my daughters a reason to consider illegal and unsafe medical care, I will forgo forcing her to involve me.

Seventy-five percent of all teenage girls under 16 tell at least one parent about their plans regarding an abortion and 61% of teens overall tell at least one parent. Among the minors who did not tell, 30% say they feared violence at home. Thus, I was disturbed by the testimony that suggested abuse in the family was exaggerated.

Several things may discourage desperate girls from seeking a judicial waiver. Among them are the possibility of being denied the

waiver; a lack of knowledge about navigating through such a complicated, intimidating process; a love-hate relationship with an abusive parent who would be reported to social services under this bill; and a loss of confidentiality, especially in rural areas.

Finally, it is misleading for women to testify about what they would have done had this law been in effect when they made their choice to have an abortion. Maybe they would have involved a parent, but the deeply felt fear they admitted experiencing may also have made them circumvent the law. I can't say and neither can they.

This law is about stopping abortion by making it more difficult, if not impossible, to get — at least legally. It is not about protecting the life of my daughter or yours.

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