

CARE ACCESS STRATEGIES

March 17, 2024

The Hon. Beverly Gossage
Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare

Dear Chair Gossage and members of the committee,

Thank you for hearing HB2749. The subject of this bill, why abortion patients seek to end their pregnancies, is a topic of great interest to researchers. In fact, experts in sociology, political science, economics and psychology have designed dozens of studies to interview patients to explore it. I conducted a study recently surveying Kansas abortion patients about their experiences. This survey was reviewed and approved by a monitoring body. Monitoring of human subject research is important, both to be certain that people who choose to participate in research are treated with respect for their privacy and dignity, and to assure that procedures are followed in the study that lend credibility to the results. Without these guardrails, researchers risk mistreating the people they hope to learn from.

The effect of this bill would be to replace careful study design of human-subject research, monitored by experts and resulting in reliable data to be used to craft effective policy, with a form at a doctor's office.

In the event that the form causes distress to the subject—who has not agreed to participate in such a study—it's unclear who would be responsible for that. Physicians and nurses, who are licensed professionals in their fields, should not be required to force participation in research on their patients. Their ethical obligations to care for their patients compassionately and without judgment cannot be upheld in the context of demanding that patients reveal deeply personal beliefs and experiences to their health care providers to get the care they need.

Moreover, it is clear from the construction of HB2749 that the bill author is familiar with the extensive^[1] data^[2] on the reasons people choose to end their pregnancies. The bill lists some common reasons cited in the literature. The reasons given for ending a pregnancy are similar regardless of where or when the question is asked; around the world^[3], women seeking abortion explain that economic factors, family size or timing, and relationship with the man involved are the issues^[4] when considering whether to continue a pregnancy.

All of this suggests that a survey of Kansas patients is unlikely to contribute to the field, in addition to be an unethical imposition on the privacy of people facing difficult situations they may not wish to share with anyone.

I hope the citations are helpful to your deliberations on HB2749.

Sincerely,

Sara Manns, MPP

Citations:

1. Biggs, M.A., H. Gould, and D.G. Foster, Understanding why women seek abortions in the US. *BMC Women's Health*, 2013. **13**(1): p. 29.
2. Foster, D.G., et al., Socioeconomic Outcomes of Women Who Receive and Women Who Are Denied Wanted Abortions in the United States. *American Journal of Public Health*, 2022. **112**(9): p. 1290-1296.
3. Finer, L.B., et al., Reasons US women have abortions: quantitative and qualitative perspectives. *Perspectives on sexual and reproductive health*, 2005. **37**(3): p. 110-118.
4. Bankole, A., Susheela Singh, and Taylor Haas. (1998). Reasons Why Women Have Induced Abortions: Evidence from 27 Countries. *International Family Planning Perspectives*, 24, 117-152. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2307/3038208>.

Bibliography

1. Biggs, M.A., H. Gould, and D.G. Foster, Understanding why women seek abortions in the US. *BMC Women's Health*, 2013. **13**(1): p. 29.
2. Foster, D.G., et al., Socioeconomic Outcomes of Women Who Receive and Women Who Are Denied Wanted Abortions in the United States. *American Journal of Public Health*, 2022. **112**(9): p. 1290-1296.
3. Bankole, A., Susheela Singh, and Taylor Haas, Reasons Why Women Have Induced Abortions: Evidence from 27 Countries. *International Family Planning Perspectives*, 1998. **24**: p. 117-52.
4. Finer, L.B., et al., Reasons US women have abortions: quantitative and qualitative perspectives. *Perspectives on sexual and reproductive health*, 2005. **37**(3): p. 110-118.