

Kriss Worthington

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CONSENT CALENDAR

July 2, 2013

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Kriss Worthington

Subject: Oppose H.R. 1797 Banning Abortions After 20-weeks of Pregnancy

RECOMMENDATION:

Send a letter to Congresswoman Barbara Lee, Senator Barbara Boxer, and Senator Dianne Feinstein expressing our opposition to H.R. .1797.

BACKGROUND:

Rep. Trent Franks of Arizona proposed a bill to ban abortions after 20-weeks of pregnancy on the basis that fetuses can feel pain at this point in pregnancies. Various states already have bans on abortions past 20 weeks of pregnancy. However, on Tuesday, June 4, 2013 the House Judiciary subcommittee voted to expand this bill to apply to the entire nation. Not only would this bill restrict women's access to abortions after 20-weeks, but it would also jail doctors who provide such services. The bill is currently moving to the Judiciary Committee and, if passed, would alter Roe v. Wade, which constitutionally allows abortions from conception to 24-weeks.

This bill does not allow for exceptions, even in cases of rape and sexual assault, only if the pregnancy directly threatens the life of the mother. However, women who require later abortion care would no longer have access to these services regardless of the reason.

Organizations such as NARAL Pro-Choice America, CREDO, and Planned Parenthood greatly oppose this bill as well.

NARAL

NARAL president llyse Hogue says, '[The bill] is outrageous. It's unconstitutional. It would set women's reproductive rights back by decades. It would put the lives of women who face serious complications later in pregnancy in danger, and it would force women with no other options to seek illegal providers straight out of the 1960s."

CREDO

"Rep. Trent Franks' H.R. 1797 is not real legislation — it's political grandstanding and it perpetuates the Republican War on Women. This clearly unconstitutional attempt to limit abortion access will cost millions to defend in court."

PLANNED PARENTHOOD

The misleadingly named "Pain-capable Unborn Child Protection Act," offered by Congressman Trent Franks (AZ), is a dangerous attempt to restrict women's access to safe and legal abortions. The bill would ban all abortions after 20 weeks with extremely limited exceptions. H.R. 1797 is clearly unconstitutional, and is a blatant decision attempt to challenge Roe. V. Wade at the expense of the health of our nation's women. Abortion is a deeply personal medical decision that should be left to a woman and her family, with the counsel of her doctor or health care provider, not politicians. The one-size-fits-all ban leaves women in potentially vulnerable and dangerous positions, and does nothing to protect women's health. Congress must reject these attempts to limit women's access to safe and legal health care.

It is necessary to take action on this issue and protect the rights of women who should have access to abortions.

CONTACT PERSON:

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Attachments:

1. Letter to Federal representatives Congresswoman Barbara Lee, Senator Dianne Feinstein, and Senator Barbara Boxer

Dear Congresswoman Barbara Lee, Senator Dianne Feinstein, and Senator Barbara Boxer,

The deceptively titled "Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act" (H.R. 1797) will prevent women from accessing abortion care after 20 weeks of pregnancy.

The City of Berkeley opposes this unconstitutional and outrageous bill that restricts women's rights and access to reproductive healthcare.

Organizations such as NARAL Pro-Choice America, CREDO, and Planned Parenthood greatly oppose this bill as well.

NARAL president llyse Hogue wraps the opposition in language about women's rights and claims banning late-term abortions will drive up illegal abortions that hurt women: '[The bill] is outrageous. It's unconstitutional. It would set women's reproductive rights back by decades. It would put the lives of women who face serious complications later in pregnancy in danger, and it would force women with no other options to seek illegal providers straight out of the 1960s."

Additionally, CREDO states that the bill is an extreme and blatantly unconstitutional attack on women. "Rep. Trent Franks' H.R. 1797 is not real legislation — it's political grandstanding and it perpetuates the Republican War on Women. This clearly unconstitutional attempt to limit abortion access will cost millions to defend in court."

Similarly, Parent Parenthood states: "The misleadingly named "Pain-capable Unborn Child Protection Act," offered by Congressman Trent Franks (AZ), is a dangerous attempt to restrict women's access to safe and legal abortions. The bill would ban all abortions after 20 weeks with extremely limited exceptions. H.R. 1797 is clearly unconstitutional, and is a blatant decision attempt to challenge Roe. V. Wade at the expense of the health of our nation's women. Abortion is a deeply personal medical decision that should be left to a woman and her family, with the counsel of her doctor or health care provider, not politicians. The one-size-fits-all ban leaves women in potentially vulnerable and dangerous positions, and does nothing to protect women's health. Congress must reject these attempts to limit women's access to safe and legal health care.

We appreciate your long-standing support on women's right to choose and recognize that this bill also needs our rigorous opposition.

Thank you for your work and dedication, The Berkeley City Council