

March 5, 2013

To the Senate Judiciary Committee

Re: Senate Bill 49

I have sat through two-days of hearings on SB 49, without being granted the opportunity to testify. I waited 2 hours yesterday and another 1.5 hours today, along with six other women at the Anchorage LIO.

After hearing today's testimony I am more strongly convinced that SB 49 is a bad bill. For a bill that is purportedly about funding, we were dragged through an ideological battleground today. It would be a mistake for the committee to think that every woman who has had an abortion makes the choice lightly, thinks of her pregnancy as an inconvenience, lives a miserable life wracked by guilt, thinks God has anything to do with it, or would want people with radically different ideological, medical and political views to have a say in such an important decision. This bill will end up in court and will fail, but not before costing Alaskans money that could be better spent elsewhere.

Senate Bill 49 will hurt people, specifically poor Alaskan women. SB 49 violates a poor woman's Constitutional rights to privacy, equal treatment and equal access. It singles out the most vulnerable segment of our population upon which to cast moral judgment. It is not neutral; far from it.

Regardless of personal or religious beliefs, abortion is legal and medically ethical in Alaska. Because of this, it is safe and must remain so for the welfare of Alaskan women. Yet through SB 49, this committee is bending over backwards to find a way to make abortion illegal while disregarding the consequences this could have on Alaska's low income population. Medical decisions affect not only a woman but entire families, the people who depend on her, and the people who care about her. Poor women don't need the Alaska Legislature questioning their moral fiber or worth as a prerequisite to healthcare.

Senate Bill 49 represents gross government overreach. It is about exerting control over a particular segment of the population that is within reach only because of their economic status. No one should be made to climb political and religious hurdles to get healthcare to which they are legally entitled, particularly not to satisfy someone else's ideological beliefs.

Respectfully,

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