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Re: SB89, SB191 and HB352

To the House Health and Social Services Committee:

Alaskans expect their lawmakers to perform their due diligence on research when seeking to enact a restrictive law of the land. We also expect that the laws are vetted and tested against legal standards, such as having at least a “rational reason” for discrepancies, and hopefully not automatically result in lawsuits. SB89, HB191, and HB352 sponsors have not adequately researched and vetted their bills and fail on these expectations.

I believe it is correct to say that SB89 is not seeking to purge abortion providers. But rather, SB89 addresses the issue: Which entities qualify for the right to compete for sex ed contracts with school districts? Following much testimony, SB89’s sponsor has failed to prove that Planned Parenthood of the Northwest and Hawaii (PPGNH) is not qualified to compete for these contracts. Deficiencies in the bills’ supporting evidence are:

1. SB89’s sponsor testified many times that the purpose of his bill was to enhance “parental choice” and codify opt outs for testing and sex ed providers. However, lawmakers and others have pointed out that parents already possess all the power they need to do this. It is not necessary to codify the right to opt out of programs in SB89, a bill that includes highly controversial and restrictive elements.

The fact that the sponsor, some committee members, and testifiers in support of SB89 consistently veer away from discussing sex ed and then engage in vehement complaints about safe, legal abortion services suggests subterfuge regarding the bills’ purpose and that opposition to the broader issue of abortion rights is actually the bills’ primary driver.

2. PPGNH has testified that they do not discuss abortion and they provide all their services with the classroom teacher present. Yet the sponsor emotionally testified on the Senate floor that PPGNH “indoctrinates” the Alaskan students they contact. However, to this date, he fails to provide any evidence supporting his statement.

SB89’s sponsor admitted, “I have not directly contacted school boards or school superintendents” about how PPGNH services are integrated, vetted, delivered, etc. in the schools. That he has not consulted with any school districts regarding PPGNH’s services, their curriculum, the school district’s assessment of the quality of the program, or how this entire bill may negatively impact their funding, their employment practices, or their budget is unacceptable negligence in collecting evidence in support of the bill.

3. In the 4/9/16 Alaska Dispatch News, an anti-abortion group, Alaska Family Council, disclosed that Care-net crisis pregnancy centers (CPC), a non-medical, non-profit, anti-

abortion organization, is competing for Alaska school district sex ed contracts. The CPCs and PPGNH politically oppose each other on abortion rights and have done so for decades. Both organizations are currently providing sex ed in Alaska school districts. Yet the sponsor is apparently convinced that, between the two non-profits, only PPGNH deliberately or inadvertently indoctrinates students on their “world view” through their sex ed services and must be restricted via SB89. The sponsor has presented no evidence of political indoctrination by either side.

Why is one group restricted while the other is not? Despite attorney Allissa Graves’ testimony, she provided no evidence that SB89 passes the “rational reason” standard for this discrepancy.

Alaskans expect lawmakers to employ thorough, professional practices when preparing to establish restrictive laws. The SB89, SB191, and HB352 sponsors have clearly neglected to fully vet and present evidence to support their claims and justification in excluding one non-profit group from contract rights while providing others a free pass.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Barbara McDaniel, President