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To Whom It May Concern;

My name is Ilona Farr, MD. I am a Family Medicine Physician who has been a resident of Alaska for 52 years and practiced medicine here for over 26 years. I am speaking out in favor of HB 173/ SB 49. As a physician I do my best to promote life and do not wish to pay for abortions that are not medically necessary as this results in the deaths of unborn Alaskan children with my tax dollars.

18 states now have passed legislation prohibiting abortions in the new state exchanges set up under Obamacare or ACA. ACA rules violate the HYDE amendment, thus it is vitally important that Alaska sets a clear standard for what is medically necessary now before the federal government imposes their definition.

I agree with most of the reasons listed, but would add the words "kidney infection with sepsis" as many women have kidney infections that are easily treatable during pregnancy so that is not a reason for an abortion. Mental health issues by themselves are not a reason for abortions nor are economic considerations. I have several patients with mental and severe physical disabilities, including one with schizophrenia, who have successfully raised children. Moreover, I have seen many women become depressed and turn to alcohol and drug use following abortions to numb the pain of killing their unborn child.

In my practice I have seen women commit suicide after having abortions, and other women die because of congenital heart disease when they became pregnant. I have seen women make the difficult decision when they have babies with congenital abnormalities about whether or not to continue to carry a child when they were developing complications related to pregnancy. These are rare exceptions (less than 4% of abortions) as most abortions are related to choice on the part of the mother and these should not be paid for with tax dollars. I also know of a person who developed breast cancer while pregnant and successfully underwent treatment while pregnant and both she and the baby are healthy. We need to get clearly worded legislation passed to limit tax payer funded abortion as there are many places in the world where abortions are forced upon women and we do not want that here in Alaska.

Please pass HB 173/ SB 49 as it is needed to clearly define and limit tax payer funded abortions to those that are truly medically necessary. Medicaid funds should not be used for elective procedures as this takes needed services away from patients who are disabled, have cancer, children, and those that are unable to care for themselves, the poorest among us, the true purpose of Medicaid.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ilona Farr, M.D.