



February 22, 2017

The Hon. Charles Schwertner, Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services Texas Senate
P.O. Box 12068
Capitol Station
Austin, TX 78711

Dear Chairman Schwertner:

On behalf of the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM) State Liaison Network, we are writing in strong opposition to Texas Senate Bill 415 and Texas Senate Bill 8.

Established in 1977, SMFM is the medical professional society for obstetricians who have additional training in the area of high-risk, complicated pregnancies. Our members see the sickest and most vulnerable patients, and aim to improve care, research, advocacy and education for pregnant women.

SMFM has long maintained that medical decisions should be made between a patient and her health care providers. The issue of pregnancy termination specifically is a deeply personal matter. Any proposed legislation that regulates medical care should be based on scientific evidence and best practices. SMFM opposes legislation that interferes with the physician-patient relationship and is not based upon scientific evidence. In fact, dilation and evacuation is the safest procedure in the second trimester of pregnancy for pregnancy termination. **Criminalizing the performance of a legal medical procedure, without exception, as SB 15 would do, will expose women to unnecessary complications and health risks and vastly interferes with the physician-patient relationship, threatens communication between the physician and patient, and potentially compromises the physician's medical judgment.**

SB 8 is problematic as well. Again, a lack of exception and creating arbitrary roadblocks to medical treatment interferes with medical care. Regarding fetal tissue donation, SMFM supports the American Congress of Obstetrician and Gynecologist's position that strong ethical practices addressing the concerns surrounding fetal tissue donation should be in place, rather than criminalizing and stopping potentially lifesaving research. We oppose any effort to profit from the sale or distribution of human fetal tissue and believe that the decision to have an abortion should be separated from that of donating tissue for research.

SMFM strongly opposes SB 415 and SB 8. Please do not hesitate to contact Katie Schubert, SMFM's Chief Advocacy Officer, at kschubert@smfm.org or (202) 863-2519 should you have questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alfred Abuhamad".

Alfred Abuhamad, MD
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt J Granato".

Matt J Granato, LL.M., MBA
Chief Executive Officer