

Testimony of Dr. Jennifer Hyer

On behalf of NARAL Pro-Choice Colorado

HB15-1041 Concerning Protecting Human Life Beginning at Conception

Sponsors: Representative Humphrey, Representative Ransom, Senator Lundberg

My name is Dr. Jennifer Hyer. I am a practicing Obstetrician-Gynecologist here in Denver. I am unable to testify in person today as I am seeing patients, so I have prepared written testimony to urge the members of the committee to oppose and vote NO on HB 15-1041.

I am providing this testimony as an individual representing myself and NARAL Pro-Choice Colorado.

In addition to being a practicing Ob-Gyn, my academic teaching work includes working with underserved women in Colorado.

HB 15-1041 raises several concerns for me, which if passed, will jeopardize the health and safety of my patients.

First, the bill defines pregnancy as "fertilization." This is not the medically accepted definition of pregnancy. The National Institutes of Health, Food and Drug Administration and The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists define pregnancy as beginning with implantation, **NOT** fertilization.

Attempting to redefine pregnancy to begin at fertilization, and then prohibit *any* form of terminating a fertilized egg is dangerous and will jeopardize patient safety. Human reproduction is intrinsically inefficient, with 30 to 70% of fertilized eggs not developing into a newborn baby due to natural processes. This includes serious complications like ectopic pregnancies, the leading cause of pregnancy related death in the 1st trimester, spontaneous miscarriages and molar pregnancies, a fertilization event that can lead to cancer.

Making it illegal to terminate all fertilized eggs will limit the ability of physicians to administer medically appropriate treatments for the conditions I just outlined. Passing this bill will cause physicians to pause and wonder "Will I be charged with a felony for treating this condition?" Patient care will be delayed and patients will ultimately be harmed.

There is an exception in the bill allowing physicians to perform abortions in order to prevent the death of pregnant mothers, as long as reasonable medical efforts are made to preserve the life of her "unborn child." However, this is not sufficient to prevent bad outcomes for patients.

I've seen situations when the pregnancy is septic, and the woman is hemorrhaging.

As a physician, HB 1041 would force me into an impossible situation: who do I save, the woman or the fetus?

And if I pick one or the other, do I go to jail?

There is nothing in HB 1041 that would stop me or any other physician for being prosecuted for performing an abortion, even if it's to save a woman's life.

The reality not every pregnancy is perfect. Human reproduction is not perfect. Things can and do go wrong with pregnancies. I see it every day.

Physicians have to exercise their medical training and their judgment to make decisions that are in the best interest of their patients.

I love my job, but it shouldn't be the role of politicians to tell me and my patients what kind of doctor I should be.

Women have to decide for themselves whether to continue a pregnancy or not. Forcing a woman with dangerous complications or forcing a woman with an unintended pregnancy to have a child she doesn't want isn't in anyone's best interests.

Abortion is a difficult choice, and I've seen women struggle with it. But that struggle belongs with the woman and her physician, not politicians.

As a physician, my first obligation is to my patients, and bills like HB 1041 completely interferes with that obligation.

HB 1041 fundamentally undermines the doctor-patient relationship.

It's dangerous to women, and it could put doctors in jail for doing their job.

Please vote no.