

HOUSE FEDERAL AND STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

BILL NUMBER: HCR5003

Support _____ Oppose XX Neutral _____

Testimony Will Be: Oral _____ Written Only: XX

For Meeting on January 15, 2021

Testimony By: Jami Reever

On Behalf Of: Kansas Appleseed

Email Address: jreever@kansasappleseed.org

Telephone: (620) 481-7171



TESTIMONY OF JAMI REEVER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
KANSAS APPLESEED CENTER FOR LAW AND JUSTICE

-
COMMITTEE ON FEDERAL AND STATE AFFAIRS
IN OPPOSITION OF HCR 5003
JANUARY 15, 2021

Members of the House Committee on Federal and State Affairs:

My name is Jami Reever; I am the Executive Director for the Kansas Appleseed Center for Law and Justice, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to the belief that Kansans, working together, can build a state full of thriving, inclusive, and just communities.

Kansas Appleseed opposes HCR 5003. The amendment to the bill of rights of the Kansas constitution proposed in this concurrent resolution would be harmful to Kansans. The proposed amendment claims to be rooted in the value Kansas places on women and children. Because Kansans do value both women and children, no constitutional provision should be allowed to let lawmakers prevent women from having an abortion necessary to save her life - as the proposed language in HCR 5003 would do. Allowing for abortion restrictions even in the case of incest, rape, or death of the mother would be an extreme measure that would indicate Kansas does not, in fact, value women.

Restrictions to reproductive freedom disproportionately impact low-income women and families. Nationally, 59% of abortions in 2014 were obtained by patients who already had at least one birth.¹ In that same year, 3 in 4 abortion patients were poor or low-income (having an income of 0-199% of the federal poverty level).² More abortion restrictions increase inequity by making the cost of obtaining an abortion more expensive.³

Other states' restrictions to abortion services demonstrate how these kinds of health policy decisions disparately impact low-income patients and patients of color. For example, Texas laws that restricted reproductive freedom and interfered with patients' healthcare had particularly harsh consequences for low-income women, women of color, and women in rural counties.⁴

At the same time, restrictions of abortion services fail to reduce the number of abortions obtained by patients in need. Nearly every state in the country experienced a decline in their abortion rates from

¹ Guttmacher Institute. "Induced Abortion in the United States." 2020. Retrieved at: <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/induced-abortion-united-states>

² Id.

³ Morgan, J. "Reproductive Equity and Target Regulation of Abortion Providers Laws: The Time, Travel, and Cost of Abortion Access." PhD diss., Indiana University South Bend. 2018. Retrieved at: https://scholarworks.iu.edu/dspace/bitstream/handle/2022/22526/JMorgan%20MPA%20Capstone%20FINAL_A1b.pdf

⁴ National Partnership for Women & Families. "Bad Medicine: Texas Edition." 2017. Retrieved at: <https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/repro/abortion/bad-medicine-texas.pdf>

2011 to 2017 regardless of whether it had restricted abortion access. However, among the 5 states and the District of Columbia that saw an increase in the number of abortions obtained in that time period, 4 had put in place at least one new restriction.⁵

Moreover, the limitation of legal abortions can force patients in need to seek other means to terminate their pregnancies. These forms of abortion are oftentimes risky for the health of the patient.⁶ States with more abortion restrictions have higher rates of maternal and infant mortality.⁷

Kansas Appleseed fundamentally believes in a thriving, inclusive, and just Kansas for all of its residents. The proposed constitutional amendment is extreme. It would perpetuate disparities for poor Kansans and Kansans of color. And there is a lot of evidence to suggest that it would not be effective at reducing the number of abortions. For these reasons, we urge Kansas state legislators who value both women and children to oppose HCR 5003.

⁵ Nash, Elizabeth and Joerg Dreweke. Guttmacher Institute. "The U.S. Abortion Rate Continues to Drop: Once Again, State Abortion Restrictions Are Not the Main Driver." 2019. Retrieved at: <https://www.guttmacher.org/gpr/2019/09/us-abortion-rate-continues-drop-once-again-state-abortion-restrictions-are-not-main>

⁶ World Health Organization. "Preventing unsafe abortion." 2019. Retrieved at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/factsheets/detail/preventing-unsafe-abortion>

⁷ Center for Reproductive Rights. "Evaluating Priorities: Measuring Women's and Children's Health and Well-being against Abortion Restrictions in the States- Volume II" 2017. Retrieved at: https://reproductiverights.org/EvaluatingPriorities?_ga=2.19698424.1158018425.1579216255-959589565.1579216255