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Planned Parenthood Great Plains Votes

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Opposing SCR 1606
House Federal and State Affairs Committee
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Planned Parenthood Great Plains Votes, the advocacy and political arm of Planned Parenthood in Kansas, opposes SCR 1606. SCR 1606 contains many false and misleading statements about the Reproductive Health Act of New York and abortion later in pregnancy. It does nothing to help Kansas women and their families. In fact, it does not impact the life of any Kansan in any concrete or measurable way. SCR 1606 serves no purpose, except to shame and stigmatize women who need abortions later in pregnancy. It is a callous attempt to politicize a very personal issue.

Abortions later in pregnancy are rare. They often result from a woman's health or life being at risk, or a severe fetal diagnosis incompatible with life outside the womb. These circumstances deserve compassion, not shaming.

Less than one percent of all abortions occur at 22 weeks or later. For women in Kansas, 90% of abortions occur during the first trimester, and 99.9% occur before 22 weeks. According to KDHE data from 2017, only ten Kansas women had an abortion at 22 weeks or later, and those procedures occurred out of state.

We must trust women and their doctors. Period. Making a decision to continue or end a pregnancy can be a complex medical and personal decision. Throughout their pregnancy, a person must be able to make health decisions that are best for their circumstances, without interference from politicians.

Shaming women and admonishing other states' policies are not the right priorities for the Kansas legislature. Here is a noncomprehensive list of bills that "died" for this legislative session at turnaround, but would help women and families:

- HB 2079- Removing the spousal exception from sexual battery
- HB 2208- Creating the crime of sexual extortion
- HB 2030- Expanding eligibility for medicaid benefits to the extent permitted by the affordable care act
- HB 2060- Repealing prohibition on municipal regulation of paid leave for employees
- HB 2324- Prohibiting the use of non-disclosure agreements to silence victims of workplace sexual harassment

- HB 2074- Requiring coverage of preexisting conditions by individual accident and sickness insurance policies
- HB 2124- Requiring health insurance plans to cover contraceptives
- HB 2258- Enacting housing protections for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking or stalking

While abortions later in pregnancy are rare, abortion is a common experience. Nearly one in four women in the United States will have an abortion before the age of 45¹. These women are our friends, neighbors, and family members.

Women who seek abortions later in pregnancy deserve dignity and respect. All women in Kansas deserve dignity and respect. We urge the committee to get its priorities straight and reject SCR 1606.

¹ Jones, Rachel K., and Jenna Jerman. "Population Group Abortion Rates and Lifetime Incidence of Abortion: United States, 2008–2014." *American Journal of Public Health (AJPH)*, Nov. 2017, ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/10.2105/AJPH.2017.304042