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Dr. Mae Winchester
Kansas City, Missouri

House Federal & State Affairs Committee

Topic: HCR 5003
Position: Opponent

My name is Mae Winchester and I am board-certified obstetrician-gynecologist practicing in Kansas City, Kansas. I am also a fellow with Physicians for Reproductive Health, a national physician-led advocacy group. As a physician providing care for patients across Kansas, I am in serious opposition of HCR 5003.

I focus solely on maternal fetal medicine, which is the care of sick moms and sick babies. Just this week alone I have cared for patients with severe liver disease, debilitating cardiac conditions, dangerous blood disorders, and life-threatening pre-eclampsia (a pregnancy-specific disease).

This week, I met a kind young family, who I will call John and Jane. John and Jane were pregnant with their first baby and were over the moon. Unfortunately, their baby has Patau syndrome, or Trisomy 13. This is a genetic condition associated with severe birth defects and significant intellectual disability. Median life expectancy is seven to ten days and very few babies with this condition live past their first year. Because of the abnormal pregnancy, maternal complications, including maternal mortality, are also increased when the fetus is affected by Trisomy 13. There is no cure for Trisomy 13.

As an ob/gyn physician, I have always believed that providing comprehensive reproductive health care is not only essential health care, but also an honor. No matter who walks through my door, no matter what brings them to the decision of needing abortion care, I am here to help them receive the care they need. When my patients are faced with impossible choices, like John and Jane were, it is my job to provide nondirectional counseling, to trust the decisions they make, and to respect the decisions they make.

Each and every patient that walks through my door is complex and unique. They cannot be put into a one-size-fits-all box. This legislation threatens the ability of my patients to receive the care they feel is right for their family. For some of my patients, this legislation endangers their lives.

I oppose any legislation that endangers access to comprehensive reproductive health care, including abortion. Patients should be allowed to make complex medical decisions that align with their faith, their family needs, and their health, without interference from the government. Abortion is an incredibly personal decision and should be treated as such.

Mae Winchester, MS, MD FACOG
Obstetrician-Gynecologist
Fellow, Physicians for Reproductive Health