

ACOG

THE AMERICAN CONGRESS OF
OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNECOLOGISTS

Office of Communications
tel: 202-484-3321
communications@acog.org
www.acog.org

ACOG Statement on Abortion Reason Bans

March 10, 2016

Washington, DC – Mark S. DeFrancesco, MD, MBA, President of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), today released the following statement:

“Access to reproductive services, including abortion care, is essential for millions of American women. Restricting abortions on the basis of a woman’s reason for needing one is not medically appropriate and endangers the health of women.

“These ‘reason bans’ represent gross interference in the patient–physician relationship, creating a system in which patients and physicians are forced to withhold information or outright lie in order to ensure access to care. In some cases, this will come at a time when a woman’s health, and even her life, is at stake, and when honest, empathetic health counseling is in order. Moreover, it threatens to hold physicians liable for providing women with the care that they need.

“By forcing women to carry pregnancies to term, regardless of their reasons for needing an abortion, these bans will compel high–risk women to endanger their lives, increasing maternal mortality. At a time when maternal mortality is already on the rise in the United States, we should be working together to improve women’s health – not to attack it. And by restricting the termination of pregnancies with genetic anomalies, the bill would cause additional severe emotional pain for women and their families.

“Abortion is health care. It’s a medical procedure that is essential for the health and well–being of women across the country. Targeting and restricting any medical procedures in this way is simply bad medicine. Research and experience have shown that where abortion is illegal or highly restricted, women resort to desperate, dangerous means to end an unwanted pregnancies, including self–inflicted trauma, consumption of chemicals, self–medication, and even unqualified, untrained and likely unsafe abortion providers.

“Importantly, decisions about reproductive health, including abortion care, are best made by a woman in honest, open, truthful consultation with the people she trusts, including her obstetrician–gynecologist – not a politician. Abortion is safe and legal – and it is safe because it is legal. For the sake of American women, we need to keep it that way.”

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (The College), a 501(c)(3) organization, is the nation’s leading group of physicians providing health care for women. As a private, voluntary, nonprofit membership organization of approximately 58,000 members, The College strongly advocates for quality health care for women, maintains the highest standards of clinical practice and continuing education of its members, promotes patient education, and increases awareness among its members and the public of the

changing issues facing women's health care. The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), a 501(c)(6) organization, is its companion organization. www.acog.org