

Ohio Section
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On behalf of the Ohio Section of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), which represents over 1500 obstetricians and gynecologists who practice in Ohio and the women they serve, we write to share concerns regarding HB214 to prohibit abortion if unborn has or may have Down syndrome.

ACOG recognizes that the abortion issue debate comes from profound moral conviction from all perspectives. While we respect the need of our members to determine their own personal values and beliefs, we believe termination of pregnancy is a medical matter between the patient and her physician, subject to the physician's clinical judgment and the patient's informed consent.

ACOG is committed to ensuring optimal women's health and is opposed to legislative proposals that limit women's access to medical care. ACOG supports women's access to all legal medical care, including family planning, contraception, and pregnancy outcome determinations.

It is critical for government to refrain from regulations that come between a patient and her physician. The provision of medical care must be a matter determined by the patient and her physician; interference in the physician-patient relationship should not be taken lightly. Medical situations are never one-size fits all; every woman's circumstance is unique, so her physician needs to be able to provide guidance that is relevant, appropriate and in their best medical judgment; and the patient needs to be able to trust that her physician is providing appropriate counsel.

Additionally, HB214 places physicians in a precarious situation by criminalizing the practice of medicine, implementing a felony of the fourth degree for a physician that performs an abortion on a pregnant woman if she is seeking the abortion "*in whole or in part*" due to a test result indicating down syndrome, prenatal diagnosis of down syndrome or "*any other reason to believe that the unborn child has down syndrome*"; this language is ambiguous and offers little clarity or protection to a physician providing safe, individualized, legal care to their patient.

Ohio physicians should be able to practice medicine as their training and experience dictate; health care providers have a professional and ethical obligation to provide care that is evidence-based, safe, individualized, and medically-appropriate.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our concerns with you and if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.