



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS

TESTIMONY LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS

House State Affairs Committee
HB 552 (Phillips), HB 1078 (King), HB 1602 (Zedler), HJR 22 (Simpson), HJR 55 (Christian)
March 23, 2011

The League of Women Voters (LWV) is a non-partisan, political organization with 29 local Leagues across the state. Women's health and access to safe, legal abortions is very important to our members. **LWV OPPOSES all of the bills referenced above and described below** that would threaten women's health and hinder their constitutional right to choose an abortion:

HB 552 (Phillips) would restrict all qualified health plans, both public and private, established under the federal healthcare reform act from covering abortion services. This legislative attempt to restrict abortion coverage would take away benefits that most have today. The bill would be especially harmful to low-income women who are expected to be the main group needing to buy insurance from health exchanges. It will be difficult, if not impossible, for them to purchase insurance coverage for abortions. Instead, they will likely find themselves turning to cheap and unsafe providers.

HJR 55 (Christian), a proposed constitutional amendment prohibiting the state from providing support for abortions or abortion related services, would also be harmful to low-income women. The measure would cut off funding for a longstanding public health program that funds a range of health services for uninsured and low income women - including abortion services which are a very small part of the program.

HJR 22 (Simpson) proposes a constitutional amendment that would prohibit the state or any state governmental entity from providing support to people or facilities that perform abortion and/or related services. This measure would have a chilling effect on access to abortions by withholding support for non-abortion-related activities from individuals and entities that perform abortions.

HB 1078 (King) would establish new and burdensome regulations for young women seeking a judicial bypass for parental consent to an abortion procedure. The proposed law would restrict minors' reproductive choices by imposing obstacles to their obtaining safe, legal abortions. Under this proposed law, a young woman's attorney and guardian *ad litem* would no longer be allowed to be the same person - possibly impacting her ability to receive a fair and impartial hearing. And the circumstances under which bypass may be approved would be further limited.

HB 1602 (Zedler) would impose burdensome and intrusive reporting requirements on women seeking abortion and their physicians - in the guise of protecting the life and health of pregnant women.

LWV appreciates this opportunity to express our views. Thank you for your consideration.