

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION *foundation*

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October 18, 2021

SENT VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Joe Sanfelippo
Chairperson
WI Assembly Committee on Health and Human Services
Wisconsin State Capitol

Re: Reject Assembly Bills 6, 593 and 595

Dear Chairperson Sanfelippo and Members of the Committee:

We are writing on behalf of the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) to object to Assembly Bills 6, 593, and 595. These bills infringe on women's right to an abortion and are anti-science. FFRF is a national nonprofit organization with more than 36,000 members across the country, including more than 1,500 members in Wisconsin. FFRF protects the constitutional separation between state and church and educates about nontheism.

We are asking you to reject Assembly Bills 6, 593 and 595 as they are not rooted in science.

In terms of Assembly Bill 593, since the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved mifepristone and misoprostol in 2000, medication abortions have become an extremely safe and effective option for women seeking abortions. In 2017, medication abortions accounted for 39 percent of all abortions in the United States¹ with a success rate of 95–98 percent.^{2 3} Risk of major complications related to medication abortions is minimal — less than 1 percent.⁴ Additionally, a recent study found that 99 percent of women who receive abortions do not regret their decision.⁵ In terms of safety, countless studies have shown women are about 14 times more likely to die during or after giving birth than from complications of an abortion.⁶ Therefore the state has no interest or business in obstructing abortion care.

In fact, limiting abortion access like Assembly Bills 6 and 595 would do, only contributes to poor maternal health outcomes. States that have more abortion restrictions have higher rates of maternal and infant mortality. Structural racism contributes to those poor maternal health outcomes for women of color who experience higher levels of stress,

discrimination, and exclusion from the health care system.⁷ In fact, the American Medical Association (AMA) has sued states that seek to enact abortion restrictions, stating that “the AMA will always defend science and open conversations about all health care options available to patients.”⁸ Furthermore, the U.N. Human Rights Committee has asserted that abortion is a human right. In fact, it has stated that denying abortion access is linked to discrimination and can constitute gender-based violence, torture, and/or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.⁹

Non-religious Americans are the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population by religious identification — 35 percent of Americans are non-Christians, and this includes more than one in four Americans who now identify as religiously unaffiliated.¹⁰ These groups agree about the right to an abortion. In fact, religiously unaffiliated individuals overwhelmingly support legal abortion at 82 percent.¹¹

As a secular nation, laws related to health care should reflect science — not the religious or other motivations of legislators. Assembly Bills 6, 593, and 595 are not backed up by scientific evidence.

We urge you to reject the invitation to impose unscientific standards on the medical community and women’s health care. Thank you for the opportunity to share this perspective with you.

Very truly,



Annie Laurie Gaylor & Dan Barker

Co-presidents

ALG/DB:ba

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