



PO BOX 8453, COLUMBIA, SC, 29202, (803) 251-2726, WWW.LWVSC.ORG

## TESTIMONY: H.3020 SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE SENATE MEDICAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

September 10, 2019

H.3020 would ban (with a few inadequate exceptions) abortion after detection of a “fetal heartbeat.”. The bill thus would violate the constitutional right to privacy as interpreted in *Roe v. Wade* and other federal court decisions.

The national position of the League of Women Voters with respect to reproductive choice is as follows:

*The League of Women Voters believes public policy in a pluralistic society must affirm the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.*

Given this pluralistic society, it should not be surprising that H.3020 is contrary to the views of a majority of South Carolinians. Winthrop Poll results in 2019 show that at least 73% of South Carolinians support substantially greater rights to terminate pregnancies than are provided in this bill.<sup>1</sup>

Also testifying to our pluralistic society, America’s religious groups are not united in their beliefs on abortion and are certainly not united in asking the state to intervene in this decision. For one example among many, the Episcopal Church explicitly opposes any federal or state action that would abridge or deny the right of individuals to reach informed decisions about continuation of their pregnancies and to act upon them as their conscience dictates.<sup>2</sup>

There is a broad ethical perspective on this issue and again H.3020 fails to measure up. The supporters of H.3020 are effectively making a claim that people have an obligation to give up bodily autonomy when their body is needed to sustain another (whether one considers an embryo or fetus a “person” or not), so long as it doesn’t cause irreparable major harm to the pregnant individual. This could be equated with mandatory organ donation, a loss of bodily autonomy. However, there is no ethical consensus in our society in support of this principle. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) recognize this is in their discussion of donation of organs from deceased individuals.<sup>3</sup> The NIH documents that even for the dead, ethical consensus supports great respect for bodily autonomy and personal dignity that outweighs a mandate for organ donation, even if needed to sustain someone’s life. H.3020 would deny pregnant persons that autonomy and that dignity.

The State of South Carolina must recognize the constitutionally protected right of privacy of the individual and must not intrude on the moral and religious liberty and personal dignity of its citizens. This bill must be rejected.

Contact: Lynn Shuler Teague, Vice President for Issues and Action, LWVSC  
803 556-9802 TeagueLynn@gmail.com

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.winthrop.edu/uploadedFiles/wupoll/february-2019-results.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, New Orleans, 1982* (New York: General Convention, 1983), p. C-156.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5088084/>