

Georgia Life Alliance Committee on HB 441

March 19, 2025

Dear Chairman Smith and the Distinguished Members of the House Committee on Judiciary Non-Civil,

Georgia Life Alliance Committee is the state affiliate of the National Right to Life Committee that represents millions of pro-life Georgians. Georgia Life Alliance is committed to winning the hearts and minds of Georgians to make abortion unthinkable.

Fighting for Georgia's future generations means we are called to act with love and compassion as we seek fairness, justice, and liberty for unborn children and their mothers. While HB 441, The Georgia Prenatal Equal Protection Act, appears well-intentioned and *partially* aligns with Georgia Life Alliance Committee's mission, we hold grave concerns with the impact, consequences, and outcomes of the bill which conflicts with our organizational mission. Some of those concerns include:

- Women seeking abortions find themselves in desperate and challenging situations. Escaping these situations require compassionate support, not punitive measures.
- Criminalizing women could deter them from seeking necessary medical care and support.
- Imposing criminal penalties on women could lead to unsafe, unregulated abortions, increased health risks, and discourage women from seeking post-abortion medical or mental health care due to fear of prosecution.
- Abortion laws in the U.S. have traditionally held the abortionist accountable rather than women undergoing abortions. This approach aligns with longstanding legal practices and reinforces the foundation of medical ethics: Do No Harm.
- The tragedy of abortion is not limited to the unborn child who loses her life. The mother who aborts her child is also a victim of a callous industry created to take lives while denying the reality that many American women suffer devastating physical and psychological damage following abortion. Women who abort have 2.6 times more psychiatric admissions than women giving birth in the 90 days following the event and seek first time outpatient mental health treatment at a 17% higher rate.¹
- Criminalizing the mother would add immeasurable stress to Georgia's already-existing mental health crisis.

Legal penalties targeted toward abortion providers, especially those operating illegally, ensure that enforcement efforts are directed at those performing the procedures rather than the women who may be vulnerable or coerced. Women in these circumstances face coercion that extends far beyond the types defined in HB 441 which limits coercion to "imminent death or great bodily injury" (LC 46 1024, lines 36-39.) Coercion extends to intense psychological abuse such as gaslighting, overt devaluation, control, manipulation, and oppression.

Those at the apex of the issue agree:

"As women who have suffered from our abortion choices, for years we discussed this trend to pass legislation that would result in women who have abortions be charged with murder. We consider the women who are just like we were. We ask the question - who

are the women who will be choosing abortion in the face of possible prison time? Those who are trafficked, prostitutes who are controlled by pimps and circumstances beyond their control, and those who are trapped in lives of incest and rape. After the trauma of abortion, it would be further trauma to force these marginalized women and girls to choose between jail and standing up to their abusers.”

~ Susan Potter, Rhonda Killingsworth, Ginny Ledbetter
From Lamb to Lion Ministry (Post-Abortion Healing Ministry)

HB 441 changes long-standing Georgia protections for women and does not address or hold accountable the abortionist, the pimp, the sex trafficker, and the irresponsible man who will face no consequence and continue to prey on women and girls for their own selfish gain.

Regardless of one’s beliefs on access to abortion, women and girls should not be further traumatized from their abortion by the fear of criminal prosecution.

We can “love them both” by pursuing ways to help women and children in desperate situations and take care not to pass laws that unintentionally encourage their further harm and additional trauma to women which is incentivized by HB 441.

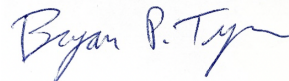
Georgia Life Alliance asks you not hold a hearing on HB 441 and/or, if a hearing is held, requests a do not pass as-is out of committee.

Thank you for your wisdom, leadership, and discernment regarding this legislation.

Respectfully,



Claire Bartlett, Executive Director



Bryan P. Tyson, Chairman of the Board

¹ Priscilla Coleman, et al, “State-Funded Abortions vs. Deliveries: A Comparison of Outpatient Mental Health Claims Over 4 Years,” American Journal of Orthopsychiatry Vol. 72, No. 1 (2002), pp. 141-152 compared claims for first time outpatient mental health treatment in California between 14,297 aborting women and 40,122 women who gave birth four years after the event and found the rate of care 17 % higher among the aborting group. Another study by P. Coleman and colleagues, “Psychiatric admissions of low-income women following abortion and childbirth,” Canadian Medical Association Journal, Vol. 168, No. 10 (May 13, 2003), available at www.cmaj.ca/cgi/content/full/168/10/1253, looked at the records of 56,741 women in the California MediCal system and found aborting women having 2.6 times more psychiatric admissions than women giving birth in the 90 days following the event.

Georgia Life Alliance advocates for the vulnerable, the abandoned, and the defenseless: the baby still in her mother’s womb, the orphaned child desperate for a safe and loving home, and a woman who finds herself in a desperate situation. We will work tirelessly to bring attention and healing to the struggles of the unborn and other at-risk groups, endeavoring to help secure life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all Georgians.