
IN GOOD CONSCIENCE

November 15, 2017

District of Columbia City Council
1350 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20004

Re: The Abortion Provider Non-Discrimination Amendment Act of 2017

Dear Councilmember:

Catholics for Choice serves as a voice for the majority of the faithful in the Catholic church who believe that the Catholic tradition supports a woman's moral and legal right to follow her conscience on important moral matters, including reproductive health decisions. Throughout the world, we strive to be an expression of Catholicism as it is lived by ordinary people. While religious voices and traditions are a vital part of public discourse, religious views should not be given disproportionate weight in matters of public policy. We believe in a world where all voices—the voices of the religious and of the secular, of Catholics and non-Catholics alike—are heard in public policy discussions.

Recently, your colleagues introduced the Abortion Provider Non-Discrimination Amendment Act of 2017. An amendment to the Human Rights of Act of 1977, this bill would prohibit discrimination against healthcare professionals for providing or being willing to participate in abortion and protect their ability to speak publicly about their support for access to abortion. It also prevents local hospitals from denying staff privileges because the healthcare professional is an abortion provider.

Catholic teaching regards conscience as the primary moral arbiter. As Catholics, we are called by our faith to follow our consciences in all matters of moral decision-making and to respect the right of others to do the same. The Abortion Provider Non-Discrimination Amendment Act would ensure that DC health professionals can use their training to provide the best possible care to their patients, based on their own consciences, without fear of facing discrimination. I urge you to support this important legislation.

When the government acts to protect the right for all individuals to live their lives according to their own beliefs and consciences, as codified in this Act, it ensures that our pluralistic society respects true religious liberty and civil rights. Catholics in DC and across the country support policies that respect the ability of women and men to make moral decisions about their lives. The Abortion Provider Non-Discrimination Amendment Act protects that right of conscience for all.

PRESIDENT

Jon O'Brien

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This Council made great strides in passing the Reproductive Health Non-Discrimination Amendment Act of 2014, enabling all individuals to be free to make reproductive health decisions according to their own consciences. The ability of providers to offer their patients the full range of reproductive care, in keeping with their own beliefs, is critical to fulfilling the promise of the Reproductive Health Non-Discrimination Act. A patient's freedom of choice is dependent on her provider's ability to deliver the care she seeks. Healthcare professionals who are free of fear of condemnation from their employer are able to use fully their training to facilitate their patients' self-determination.

I urge you to support the protection of civil rights in DC by supporting the Abortion Provider Non-Discrimination Amendment Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jon O'Brien". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "J" and "O".

Jon O'Brien
President

Cc: Councilmembers Allen, Bonds, Evans, Grosso, Nadeau, and White.