

To: Public Health and Welfare Committee
From: Carol Petraitis
Date: April 20, 2011
Subject: Testimony Regarding Senate Bills 642, 660, 662 and 732

As a follow up to the April 13th Public Senate Hearing concerning abortion clinics and proposed statutory changes (re: Senate Bills 642, 660, 662 and 732), we are submitting the attached testimonies to help the committee as they deliberate.

Please note we are submitting one letter on behalf of a physician who is under U.S. Marshal protection. His testimony, therefore, is not written on an official letterhead and his full name has not been included in order to maintain the doctor's safety.

Attached: Testimony from Dr. E.S.
Testimony from Dr. Ralph Riviello
Testimony from Dr. John Roizin

April 17, 2011

The Honorable Pat H. Vance, Chair
The Honorable Shirley M. Kitchen, Minority Chair
Public Health and Welfare Committee
168 Capitol Building
PO Box 203031
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3031

Dear Senator Vance:

I am writing to address the issues of the shortage of abortion providers, their credentials and the targeted threats they live with regularly.

Less than 1,800 sites in the U.S. provide abortion services. The professional membership organization of abortion providers is called the National Abortion Federation (NAF) located in Washington DC. Of its approximate 1,000 physician members, only 50% are obstetrician-gynecologists and the rest are family physicians, surgeons, emergency physicians, internists, and a few pediatricians. Clearly, abortion care is within the scope of services of several medical specialties and should not be limited to obstetrician-gynecologists.

I am an academically trained pediatrician with a post-residency fellowship in adolescent medicine but have specialized in reproductive health care. I was the Board Chair of the NAF from 2002-04 and a medical director of a Planned Parenthood from 2006-09. I maintain an academic appointment at a Philadelphia medical school. Currently, I am the medical director of a federally-funded inner city health center in Philadelphia and provide abortion services part-time though on a weekly basis.

In 1980, I joined the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Rochester and part of my responsibilities included directing an adolescent primary care and family planning program. In 1994, frustrated at the lack of abortion services for inner city, poor and minority women, I began to study medical abortion at the University of Rochester. By 1997, I had learned how to perform a first trimester abortion. Over the next decade, I published almost 40 peer-reviewed manuscripts on abortion related research. In addition, with support from the University, I established an abortion training program for family medicine residents. We accepted residents from around the U.S. and trained over 100 physicians who currently provide abortion services.

Over the last 15 years, I have developed extraordinary skills in providing safe first trimester abortions and have never had a complication leading to a hospitalization. As faculty at the University of Rochester, I have provided abortion trainings or miscarriage management trainings (the latter being the same skills but in countries where abortion is illegal) in India, Macedonia, Albania, Kyrgyzstan, Vietnam, Philippines, and Kenya. I have worked in parallel with the World Health Organization in their Unsafe Abortion Unit, which addresses the 100,000 women who die each year from unsafe abortion.

The provision of abortion services can be a simple skill to learn but there must be a tremendous commitment by the physician because of the targeted violence that they are likely to receive as well as their family and staff. In 1998, Dr. Barnett Slepian, an obstetrician-gynecologist and abortion provider, was assassinated in Buffalo, NY by James Kopp. It was Kopp's fifth shooting at an abortion provider in as many years. The previous year, an obstetrician-gynecologist colleague from Rochester was shot at through his back window, an event later determined to be Kopp's fourth shooting. Fortunately, he was not hurt. Kopp was identified by my neighbor, who had seen him casing my home in Rochester two weeks prior to Dr. Slepian's death. After Dr. Slepian's killing, Attorney General Janet Reno provided me with a 24-hour Federal Marshall detail for the next four months while the FBI searched for Kopp. When they were sure he was in Europe and hiding, the detail ended. The event has left me with a bullet proof vest and an inability to walk by a window without shade covering in the evening.

Mr. Kopp was identified as the Atomic Dog in the epilogue of the Army of God's manual describing how to kill abortion providers that was dug up in the back yard of Shelley Shannon who in 1993 shot Dr. George Tiller in both arms. Dr. Tiller, a family physician and prominent abortion provider, was killed by Scott Roeder in 2010. Dr. Leroy Carhart, a former U.S. Army general surgeon, has since taken over Dr. Tiller's abortion practice and is most well known for challenging a number of onerous restrictions on abortion access and providers in court, including in *Stenberg v. Carhart*, 530 U.S. 914 (2000), which struck down a Nebraska law restricting the provision of second-trimester abortions. Unfortunately, Dr. Carhart still fears for his life.

I would like the legislators to allow me, a pediatrician with my extensive training in reproductive health, to continue to help Pennsylvania women.

Against the advice of the Federal Marshals who recommended that I not raise my profile in the public, I am sending this letter.

Sincerely,

E.S., MD

Address and name withheld as a safety precaution

CC: Amy Bolze, Executive Director of the Public Health and Welfare Committee
Bob Mensch
Edwin Erickson
Joseph B. Scarnati
Lisa Baker
Kim Ward
Mary Joe White
Vincent Hughes
Richard Kasunic
Judith Schwank