



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS

TESTIMONY LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY APRIL 5 2017

I am Chris Frandsen, testifying as a member and on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Texas. We appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today in **OPPOSITION to HB 434.**

The League of Women Voters of Texas **OPPOSES HB 434**. Women's health and access to comprehensive reproductive health services, including safe, legal abortions, are priority issues for the League and its members throughout the state. Our position on this issue, like other League positions, is derived through a lengthy and thoughtful process involving the participation of 24 local Leagues representing more than 5,000 supporters throughout the state of Texas. HB 434 would be an unreasonable impediment to the constitutional right to an abortion.

This proposed law would prevent parents of a child born with severe defects who have not received adequate information about the health condition of the fetus from bringing a lawsuit against the physician and/or other health professionals who withheld information. Eliminating a wrongful birth claim deprives such parents of the right to sue for monetary damages to cover the lifetime costs of caring for their child. These cases are rare but are appropriate redress for parents in such situations.

Eliminating the "wrongful birth" claim is an unreasonable restriction on the constitutional right of a woman, in consultation with her physician and family members, to make an informed decision about whether to have an abortion. HB 434 is a not so subtle way of giving medical personnel the opportunity to impose their religious beliefs on pregnant women by withholding information about the condition of the fetus – and depriving women of making an informed decision about continuing the pregnancy.

The League again thanks this Committee for the opportunity to express our views.

For additional information, please contact: Julie Lowenberg, Issue Chair for Women's Health: jmlowenberg@sbcglobal.net; 214-352-4667.

The League of Women Voters of Texas (LWV-TX) is a nonpartisan citizens' organization that has fought since 1919 to improve our government and engage all citizens in the decisions that impact their lives. It represents more than 5000 members and supporters throughout Texas.

The League of Women Voters never supports or opposes candidates for office or political parties. The member-driven organization of women and men encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and seeks to influence public policy through education and advocacy of positions based on extensive issue study and consensus.