

Late Backup

ITEM NO. 82

9/25/14

Change Initiated by IFC

RESOLUTION NO.

WHEREAS, House Bill 2, passed the second special session of the 83rd legislative session contains restrictions including a ban on abortions after 20 weeks, a restriction on pharmaceutical abortion, a requirement that all doctors who perform abortions have hospital admitting privileges within 30 miles of each facility where they provide care, and a requirement that all abortion clinics meet the standards required of ambulatory surgical centers; and

WHEREAS, the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, [the Texas Medical Association, and the Texas Hospital Association have all agreed] that the provisions in HB 2 will put women's health and safety in danger; and

WHEREAS, there are currently 20 clinics in Texas that provide abortion services, and if HB 2 is fully enacted there may be as few as 6 clinics open in the State of Texas; and

WHEREAS, one of three clinics in Austin has already closed as a result of [HB 2, which has a detrimental impact on the availability of local services; and]

WHEREAS, the number of people of reproductive age who live more than 100 miles from a Texas abortion clinic has more than doubled in the past year as a result of HB 2; and

WHEREAS, Texas women living outside of the five largest cities in the state have been the most affected by the clinic closures, requiring extensive travel to access care which implies higher costs and logistical challenges, and in some cases results in delays accessing care; and

WHEREAS, many of the clinics closed as a result of HB 2 also provided other services including well-woman exams, cervical cancer screenings, STD testing and treatment, and birth control services; and

WHEREAS, the Texas Legislature has already restricted access to reproductive health services through cuts to the family planning budget during the 82nd legislative session; and

WHEREAS, according to the Texas Department of State Health Services, state contractors are seeing 77 percent fewer family planning clients and cost has increased by 17 percent per client; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin has lobbied previously in support of expanded women's health services and programs in resolution no. 20130321-045;
and

WHEREAS, the provisions in HB 2 have proven to make health care less accessible by pushing medically unnecessary regulations on clinics to interfere with a physician's ability to provide the highest level of care for their patients; and

WHEREAS, abortion is one of the safest medical procedures with minimal risk, with less than .05% resulting in major complications that might need hospital care; and

WHEREAS, Austin is one of the few cities in Texas that still has an abortion clinic after implementation of regulations from HB 2, meaning more Texans are traveling to Austin to receive care; which imposes an additional strain of resources in Austin including additional wait periods for patients receiving care; and

WHEREAS, United States District Judge Yeakel issued an opinion on August 29th 2014 that struck down parts of HB 2 and stated that the bill places an "undue burden on women" and "undeniably reduces meaningful access to abortion care for women throughout Texas;" and

WHEREAS, the City Council has a vested interest in ensuring Austinites have fair access to a full spectrum of reproductive health care services as well as advocating against provisions which place an undue burden on patients seeking care; **NOW, THEREFORE,**

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The City of Austin's Legislative Program for the 84th Texas Legislature is hereby amended to support legislation that would repeal any and all provisions that were passed in House Bill 2 relating to the regulation of abortion procedures, providers and facilities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to conduct a study analyzing the impacts of HB 2 on Austinites and present his findings to the Public Health and Human Services Committee no later than November 18th 2014.

ADOPTED: _____, 2014

ATTEST: _____

Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk