



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF
FAMILY PHYSICIANS
STRONG MEDICINE FOR AMERICA

September 28, 2015

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner & Minority Leader Pelosi:

I am writing on behalf of the 120,900 members of the American Academy of Family Physicians to express our strong opposition to the "Women's Public Health and Safety Act" (H.R. 3495), which will be considered by the House of Representatives this week. This legislation would, if enacted, expand the ability of states to selectively prohibit identified physicians and health care facilities from participating in the Medicaid program. Furthermore, this legislation represents an unprecedented level of legislative interference in the patient-physician relationship.

We are deeply concerned with the overall intent of this legislation and, more specifically, its attempts to interfere with the patient-physician relationship. Our most pointed criticism is directed at the phrase "or by any individual or entity based on the individual's or entity's involvement in abortions." This language is not only ill-advised, it is dangerous. Health care decisions should be made by a patient in consultation with her physician(s). Patients deserve an environment that encourages open communication with their physicians on health care options appropriate for their health status. This legislation would potentially discourage and prohibit physicians from discussing a safe and legal health care service with their patients. As previously stated, this represents an unprecedented level of legislative interference in the patient-physician relationship.

Again, we urge the House to reject this legislation. The proposal represents an inappropriate and misguided intrusion into the patient-physician relationship and actually seeks to criminalize a physician for discussing a legal, safe, and appropriate health care service with their patients. This is a dangerous bill and it should not pass.

Sincerely,

Reid Blackwelder, MD, FAAFP
Board Chair

C: The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
The Honorable Steve Scalise
The Honorable Steny Hoyer

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