

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
HOUSE BILL: 3320 AND SENATE BILL: 1209
PUBLIC HEARING ON JUNE 17, 2019
SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE PRO LIFE LEGAL DEFENSE FUND, INC.

Chairman Eldridge, Chairwoman Cronin, and Honorable Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to speak. My name is Robert W. Joyce. I am an attorney in good standing in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. I reside at 18 Edgemont Street, Roslindale, MA 02131.

I am presenting this testimony on behalf of the Massachusetts Pro Life Legal Defense Fund, Inc. (PLLDF), a non-profit organization for which I serve as President. For over 44 years, PLLDF has stalwartly provided pro bono legal services for women and men, for the unborn, for pregnant minors, and for the parents of pregnant minors.

I testify in opposition to House Bill 3320 and Senate Bill 1209, for these reasons: (1) they obscure the fundamental truths about human life; (2) they invite serious health risks to Massachusetts minors; and (3) they will weaken families in Massachusetts.

Americans don't like obscure language. That is why so many were discouraged and bemused by former President Clinton's evasive statement that "It depends upon what the meaning of the word 'is' is."

PLLDF wants you to clearly focus on what is. That is why we object to the proposed change in the statutory definition of abortion.

Existing law defines abortion as "the knowing destruction of the life of the unborn child." The proposed bill would replace it with "any medical treatment intended to induce the termination of a clinically diagnosable pregnancy." The new definition would whitewash the reality of abortion. It would direct attention away from what is – away from the scientific facts that each human embryo and each human fetus is a new, unique, developing, distinct, fully programmed member of the human family.

Some people say that the use of the word “child” in the current definition is misleading. They say that whatever the fetus is, it is not a child; but they don’t describe what it is. If you insist the present definition needs improvement, why not simply substitute the words “human being” for “child”. After all, that is scientifically true; the fetus is – and it is 100% human. If healthy and unless destroyed, it will grow from human immaturity to human maturity, all the while as a member of the human family

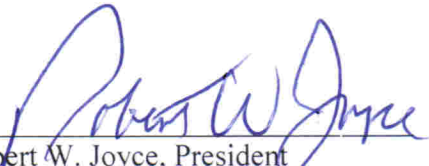
The bills are unhealthy for minors and disrespectful of their parents. By eliminating the requirement of parental consent, or judicial involvement they worsen the already disgraceful consent procedures in our courts. One Superior Court judge commented that the ready availability of such judicial authorization weakens the family unit and widens the chasm between parent and child, thereby rendering parents unable to understand or offer loving support to a child. These bills would have this legislature magnify the assault on family units.

And the informed consent provision of the bills continues to put minors at risk for what the U.S. Supreme Court has referred to as a risk of “devastating psychological consequences” when a woman makes an abortion decision which is not fully informed. Shockingly, current official Massachusetts informed consent forms do not even mention a risk of adverse psychological consequences – and they shamefully continue to describe abortion as simply a procedure in which the contents of the womb are removed. That seems like the greatest understatement since Noah said “It looks like rain,” and it’s unfair to women and men.

You can do much better to protect women’s health, pregnant minors, unborn human life and Massachusetts parents. I urge you stop these bills in this Honorable Committee. Please vote that House Bill 3320 and Senate Bill 1209 “ought not to pass.”

Thank you very much.

Dated: June 17, 2019


Robert W. Joyce, President
Pro Life Legal Defense Fund, Inc.