

May 1, 2019

The Honorable Peter Lucido
Senate Judiciary Committee, Chair
Post Office Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48910

Dear Chairman Lucido:

On behalf of the Michigan State Medical Society (MSMS), which represents over 15,000 physicians caring for millions of patients statewide, I am writing to share our feedback on Senate Bills 229 and 230, which seek to ban the practice of "dismemberment abortion," as it is defined in the bill.

Our concerns stem primarily from the potential criminal penalties that could be imposed and the concerning precedent the legislation sets with respect to interference into the sanctity and confidentiality of the physician-patient relationship. These concerns are consistent with standing policy of both MSMS and the American Medical Association (AMA).

Regardless of the underlying intent, we object to efforts, legislative or otherwise, that might cause a physician to forego exercising his or her best professional medical judgment for fear of criminal prosecution. Although the legislation seeks to accommodate circumstances under which the life of the mother is at risk, these circumstances are often nebulous, and cultivating an environment of fear and uncertainty in this way could lead to increased complications and adverse patient outcomes.

While the policies of both the AMA and MSMS do not speak specifically to the dilation and evacuation method (D&E) discussed during the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on April 25, it is, according to the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the "predominant approach to abortion after 13 weeks," and it is "evidence-based and medically preferred because it results in the fewest complications for women compared to alternative procedures." As we recognize that abortion is a medical procedure, we would oppose any legislative interference that would hinder physician discretion to act within the standards of good medical practice and in the best interest of the patient.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our feedback on Senate Bills 229 and 230. Should you have any further questions, please contact MSMS Director of State and Federal Government Relations Christin Nohner at cnohner@msms.org or 517-336-5737.

Sincerely,



Betty S. Chu, MD, MBA
President
Michigan State Medical Society