



AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION OF UTAH FOUNDATION, INC
355 NORTH 300 WEST, SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84103
(801) 521-9862 PHONE • (801) 532-2850 FAX
ACLU@ACLUUTAH.ORG • WWW.ACLUUTAH.ORG

March 16, 2011

Governor Gary R. Herbert
Utah State Capitol Complex
350 North State Street, Suite 200
P.O. Box 142220
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-2220

RE: House Bill 354, "Insurance Amendments Relating to Abortion"

Dear Governor Herbert:

On behalf of the ACLU of Utah, we urge you to veto H.B. 345, "Insurance Amendments Relating to Abortion." The ACLU of Utah has consistently advocated for policies that support women's decision-making, advance women's health and well-being, and ensure strong, healthy families. H.B. 354 jeopardizes these principles. The ACLU of Utah opposes this bill because it interferes in private medical decisions by taking away insurance coverage for abortion.

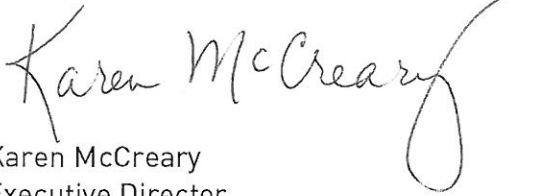
Currently, most insurance plans provide coverage of abortions along with other pregnancy related services, such as prenatal care, labor and delivery, and miscarriage care. This is a sensible practice because many things can happen in a pregnancy. Insurance coverage for abortion allows every woman to get the health care she needs. If signed into law, H.B. 354 would prohibit insurance companies from providing comprehensive coverage. It would ban an insurance company from selling, and prevent an individual from buying, policies that cover abortion.

Preventing insurance companies from covering a legal medical procedure, just because some people are opposed to it, means a woman may be forced to continue a catastrophic pregnancy because she cannot afford the high out-of-pocket costs to pay for an abortion. Or she may be forced to postpone abortion care while attempting to raise the necessary funds – a delay that can exacerbate both the costs and the health risks of the procedure.

No woman wants to hear that carrying her pregnancy to term will threaten her health. No woman wants to hear that the baby she's been looking forward to holding will likely not survive the pregnancy. No woman plans to have an abortion for any reason. In difficult situations, medical decisions should not be made by politicians, but rather be made by a woman, her family, and her doctor.

It's wrong for the government to take away insurance coverage for a legal medical procedure. Particularly in these difficult times, the government should focus on supporting women and families, not playing politics with women's health. Politicians should stay out of the way of insurance companies that want to continue covering comprehensive health care for women. For that reason we strongly urge you to veto H.B. 354.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen McCreary". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a large, sweeping loop at the end of the last name.

Karen McCreary
Executive Director

Cc: John Pearce, Esq
General Counsel