

I am writing to express my unwavering support for the right of women to have reproductive freedom, and to strongly condemn our Governor calling a special session with the intention of eroding women's rights and restricting access to abortion with this proposed legislation.

Reproductive freedom is a fundamental human right that must be protected and upheld. The decision to have an abortion is deeply personal and should remain a choice made by a woman in consultation with her healthcare provider, free from political interference.

It is disheartening and concerning that the Iowa Governor is attempting to undermine women's reproductive rights through the mechanism of a special session. This maneuver disregards the voices and needs of countless women in Iowa who rely on safe and legal abortion services. Such actions not only jeopardize women's health and well-being but also infringe upon their right to make decisions about their own bodies and futures.

Specific to proposed HBS 255, I have strong objections.

**Infringement on Women's Autonomy:** The proposed bill interferes with a woman's right to make personal decisions about her own body and reproductive health. It restricts her autonomy by imposing unnecessary regulations and requirements on access to abortion care.

**Arbitrary Detection of Fetal Heartbeat:** The proposed bill prohibits abortions once a fetal heartbeat is detected, which is an arbitrary marker for determining the legality of abortion. It fails to consider other important factors, such as the viability of the fetus or the woman's individual circumstances, which should inform the decision-making process.

**Lack of Consideration for Women's Health:** The proposed bill places unnecessary burdens on healthcare providers by mandating specific testing methods, such as abdominal ultrasounds, without medical justification. These requirements may increase costs and delays in accessing abortion care, potentially compromising the health and well-being of women.

**Insufficient Exceptions:** While the proposed bill includes limited exceptions for cases of medical emergencies and certain fetal abnormalities, it fails to consider other crucial circumstances. It does not provide exceptions for cases of rape, incest, or situations where a woman's physical or mental health is at risk, disregarding the complexity and diversity of women's experiences.

**Disregard for Medical Professional Judgment:** The proposed bill restricts physicians' ability to exercise their professional judgment in determining appropriate healthcare for their patients. It imposes rigid requirements on healthcare providers, undermining their ability to provide individualized care based on the specific needs and circumstances of each patient.

**Lack of Public Health Focus:** Instead of prioritizing comprehensive sex education, accessible contraception, and comprehensive healthcare services, the bill focuses on restricting access to abortion. It disregards evidence-based approaches that help reduce unintended pregnancies and ensure women have the necessary resources and support for their reproductive health.

By limiting access to safe and legal abortion care, the proposed bill puts women's health and lives at risk. It may lead to an increase in unsafe and illegal procedures, driving women to seek alternative and potentially dangerous methods of terminating pregnancies. It is crucial to respect and support women's choices regarding their own bodies, including the decision to seek abortion care.

Additionally, it is deeply concerning that politicians are attempting to make decisions regarding women's healthcare through this proposed bill. **Women's healthcare should be guided by medical professionals and individuals who have direct experience and expertise in the field, rather than being subjected to political agendas.** Such interference undermines the integrity of the healthcare system and disregards the importance of personalized, evidence-based care for women. Women deserve the right to access comprehensive healthcare services without undue political interference, ensuring their well-being and reproductive autonomy are prioritized.

Iowa can and should be better.

Respectfully,

Angie Paschall  
Cherokee, Iowa