

3/11/2020

Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

Please support HB53 (sponsored by Delegate Parrott) THE MINORS CONTRACEPTIVE DEVICE BILL which protects the fundamental right of minors and parents to obtain fully informed consent.

It is with great hope for parents in Maryland to see bills being proposed like HB53 that strengthens and support parent's ability to protect their children and family. HB53 is crucial in protecting minors' ultimate access to informed consent, and parents' fundamental right to make decisions impacting their children's health and welfare, particularly regarding invasive procedures which confer potentially serious and lasting side effects.

One of the fundamental pillars that keep America strong is the strength of our family: namely the love of the parents for their kids and their ability to protect them from outside interests. This love is wonderfully described by James E. Faust when he said, "The depth of the love of parents for their children cannot be measured. It is like no other relationship. It exceeds concern for life itself."

History has shown us that there are outside interests have incentives to prey on minors to obtain profit, power, and other benefits and they have attempted to use the government and their resources to achieve this end. These manipulation and predatory behaviors come in many forms including but not limited to: child labor, kiddie branding and marketing to minors for products like smoking and drinking. Our American society also recognized that minors are particularly vulnerable to these manipulation thereby we have established certain protections like smoking age limit, drinking age limit, minimum working age requirements, driving age minimum, voidable contract when minors sign a contract and parental consent. Through these actions, our American society recognized the existence of these manipulations and predatory nature to target the most vulnerable people in our society, our kids, and our society has stood up and passed legislations to protect our kids.

Currently, the predatory attacks have transformed into new and damaging attacks on parental rights to protect their children, including raising the minor ages to consent and in some cases to get rid of parental consent all together. These master-fully orchestrated attempts are aimed at obliterating parental right and in essence the American family—the fundamental means by which parents can protect their family and kids from outside predatory interests—and thus these attacked attempt to reverse old protections, set up to protect minors. They targeted our young minor kids for their own profit and benefit but use sophisticated methods (including government agencies/officials and cleverly-designed regulations and arguments) to hide their true intent. They argue that it's for the benefit of the minors--arguing for so call "minor rights." They assert minors should be access to "benefits" of products, procedures, drugs, medical devices and treatments and other items without parental consent. They also argue that the state and government agencies, officials, agents, professionals and professional organizations, and corporations should replace the parents as

the protector of the family. In actually, what they desire is to use the government in order to take away parental protection of minors and thus obtain total access to our children in order to obtain financial benefits and power, leaving our kids and family unprotected. Who then really benefit but these outside entities from minors being left unprotected? Who wins in the end when parental rights are gone and when they succeed in the passage of lowering minor consent laws? When everyone (from government agencies, doctors, pharmacists, dentists, professional organizations, corporate sponsors, etc...) success and obtain absolute power to manipulate and control our minors, are our minor really winning? Will this new group of defenseless minors the winners or victims of these predatory attacks? No, it is not the minors (that are marketed and proclaimed by these outside interests as the winners) but the outside interests themselves. In fact, it is only when we consider the financial incentives of these outside interests when we then uncover these true winners.

Sadly, these monetary incents of outside interest are not frequently discussed but in fact sophisticated marketed to make them masterfully hidden when regulations, legislations, and policies that restrict and eliminate parental rights are introduced. The weakening of parent's fundamental right to protect their family and children is a dangerous slippery and opens the door to abuse by these outside interests. Giving absolute power to government agencies, organizations, professionals and outside entities without the protection of parental rights in actually leaves our families and our children defenseless again abuse and harm. This is so because government and agencies are not without corruption and abuse and can be used by industries, corporate power and other parties with outside interest for their future profit or power. For instance,

“[a] ProPublica analysis has found that doctors who receive payments from the medical industry do indeed prescribe drugs differently on average than their colleagues who don't. And the more money they receive, the more brand-name medications they tend to prescribe... Doctors who got money from drug and device makers prescribed a higher percentage of brand-name drugs overall than doctors who didn't, our analysis showed... 'It again confirms the prevailing wisdom ... that there is a relationship between payments and brand-name prescribing," said Dr. Aaron Kesselheim, an associate professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School who provided guidance on early versions of ProPublica's analysis. "This feeds into the ongoing conversation about the propriety of these sorts of relationships. Hopefully we're getting past the point where people will say, 'Oh, there's no evidence that these relationships change physicians' prescribing practices.' ”” (<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2016/03/17/470679452/drug-company-payments-mirror-doctors-brand-name-prescribing>).

Moreover, “[a]s tens of thousands of Americans die from prescription opioid overdoses each year, an exclusive analysis by CNN and researchers at Harvard University found that opioid manufacturers are paying physicians huge sums of money -- and the more opioids a doctor prescribes, the more money he or she makes.” (<https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/11/health/prescription-opioid-payments-eprise/index.html>).

If there is already an incentives for doctors and other outside interests to be influenced by drug companies to prescribe more drugs, when minors are left to decide on their own about serious issue like medication, without parental protection (and even in some cases without parental knowledge), what prevents the doctors, drug companies and other outside interest from financial

benefit from pressuring minors to increase drug usage? In fact, many of these entities who desire to eliminate parental right are the same who win financially from having more dependent, unprotected minor populations. It seems that the real outcome is that everyone wins but the minors, the parents, and the family; while the financial benefits the outside interests (like from government agencies, to doctors, to pharmacist, to dentists, professional organizations, corporate sponsors, etc.) continue to greatly profit from the elimination of the parental right to protect their family.

Also, an example of a situation when government attempts to take over the role of parents that resulted in serious failures and abuse is in our present day government controlled foster care system. Furthermore, in 1/12/18, Newsweek article details how “most Americans who are victims of sex trafficking come from our nation's own foster care system.” (<https://www.newsweek.com/we-have-set-system-sex-traffic-american-children-779541>) Sadly, even doctors are not above abuse. See “Oral surgeon investigated for sex tourism had dozens of hidden-camera devices, 1000s of child-porn images, police say”( <https://www.mercurynews.com/2020/02/26/walnut-creek-arrest-reveals-secret-world-of-child-sex-trafficking-girls-as-young-as-9-allegedly-being-bought-and-sold-in-the-bay-area/>). In this situation, an Oakland man named Cassidy Lavorini-Doyle, 36, an oral surgeon who currently sits in a Contra Costa County jail awaiting trial on charges of human trafficking, child porn possession, and attempted kidnapping. After his arrest, the state Attorney General’s office moved to revoke Lavorini-Doyle’s dental license, saying the allegations gave state prosecutors “grave concerns” about him interacting with children. Furthermore, according Psychology Today, “The sad truth is that many grown-up foster children end up homeless and on the streets. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports that up to 50% of former foster or probation youth end up homeless within the first year and a half of their emancipation.” (<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/somatic-psychology/201201/the-foster-care-system-and-its-victims-part-3>)

Furthermore, children need to be raised and represented by parents who love them, not by disconnected government officials and can lead to dangerous situations. A tragic example of what happens when government power is allowed to trump parental rights to protects their children and families is the forced sterilization of what at that time were determined as “defective” young women.

Although the eugenics movement in the United States flourished during the first quarter of the 20th Century, its roots lie in concerns over the cost of caring for "defective" persons, concerns that first became manifest in the 19th Century. The history of state-supported programs of involuntary sterilization indicates that this "surgical solution" persisted until the 1950s. A review of the archives of prominent eugenicists, the records of eugenic organizations, important legal cases, and state reports indicates that public support for the involuntary sterilization of insane and retarded persons was broad and sustained. During the early 1930s there was a dramatic increase in the number of sterilizations performed upon mildly retarded young women. This change in policy was a product of the Depression. Institutional officials were concerned that such women might bear children for whom they could not provide adequate parental care, and thus would put more demands on strained social services. There is little evidence to suggest that the excesses of the Nazi sterilization program (initiated in 1934) altered

American programs. .. Data are presented here to show that a number of state supported eugenic sterilization programs were active long after scientists had refuted the eugenic thesis. (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/3299450>)

Therefore, when it comes to raising children and their families, parents are better than the government or any outside interests who might have financial or other gains by the weakening of parent's rights to protect their family and children. In fact, children who have parental support are likely to have better health as adults. Healthy adults make a better society. As a country, we all benefit from a stronger family and vital to the strength of the family are the fundamental rights of all parents to direct the upbringing, education, care, and welfare of their children without interference from state government. HB 53 and bills like it will ensure the strength of the family by strengthening parental protection.

In the 1980s, my parents emigrated from their war-worn communist country to search the freedoms and liberties for their children in America. They risked everything including their lives. It is their devotion to their children and their children's future that parents risked everything. This is an example of the love and commitment to protect their children that parents all over Maryland and all across American have. It is this commitment and love that are being attacked now. But it is this parental love that is recognized in bills like HB 53. As John Adams said, "You will never know how much it has cost my generation to preserve YOUR freedom. I hope you will make a good use of it." It's hard sometimes to appreciate our liberties and freedom when we have it but if we don't fight to keep it, they will not be around. Once gone, they are hard to get back if ever. Please fight for our fundamental parental right to direct the upbringing, education, care, and welfare of the parent's child. Our future, our children's future and the future of many generations to come are in your hands. Please support HB 53 and bills like it.

In conclusion, we are a great nation because we value the integrity of parent's role to protect their kids and family from the predatory nature and greed from outside interests (that pretend to be promoting the best interest of our kids) but in secret have other self-benefiting agendas. We are a strong nation because we recognized the love of parents for their children and how like mama and papa bears we will fight to our last-breath for our kids and their health and well-being. There is a saying that summarizes parental love and commitment to their children:

"You may believe or not, but it is true, in this world no one can give you truly love more than your parents."

There is nothing more fundamental to keeping our families and children strong, then the right of parents to protect their families and their children. As concerned parents and citizens in Maryland, we deeply care about children and are troubled by how parental rights are slipping away. The strength of nation depends on the strength of our families. According to Thomas Jefferson, "The price of freedom is eternal vigilance." We need bills like HB53 in order to protect parent's rights to protect their kids and family from outside interests. Please support HB 53 and bills like it to strength our wonderful families all across Maryland and to send message across the country that our kids are not for sale and that we stand by our families and parental rights.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Jennings