

SB0891
FAVOR
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Dear Senators,

As a nurse, volunteer and mother to 4 daughters, I support Senate Bill 891 which seeks to restore a certain amount of parental rights.

Last year, this legislature passed the Mental Health Access Initiative which lowered the age of consent from 16 to 12 for minors seeking mental healthcare, and, undermines parental rights. While I understand the law sought to address problems that arise when there is not a healthy relationship in the home, those cases are exceptions.

Instead of finding solutions for those minors that may need distance from their parents, the Mental Health Access Initiative obfuscated the rights of all parents leaving potentially life-altering decisions in the hands of strangers.

This is from the NIH website:

“Adolescence is a tumultuous time, full of changes and transformations. . . The adolescent population is highly vulnerable to driving under the influence of alcohol and social maladjustments due to an immature limbic system and prefrontal cortex. . . Adolescents may become involved with offensive crimes, irresponsible behavior, unprotected sex, juvenile courts, or even prison. According to a report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the major cause of death among the teenage population is due to injury and violence related to sex and substance abuse. . . Pharmacological interventions to regulate adolescent behavior have been attempted with limited success.” (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3621648/>)

The article is very detailed regarding the development of the brain and the effect that biological chemicals and hormones and external factors have on that development.

Parents are the ones who know their children best and, in most cases, will have the best interest of those children in mind. We know that the teenage years are challenging for the parent/child relationship. The article does a good job of explaining why. We also know too well, from the case of the gymnasts and Larry Nassar, what can happen when trust is misplaced.

Parental rights need to be respected especially in healthcare decisions for minors. If a minor daughter is seeking an abortion, the minor girl has engaged in sexual intercourse. As the article points out, teenagers make impulsive decisions. Parents need to know what’s happening in their children’s lives to effectively minister to them and provide proper care and counseling.

Having sex as a minor is serious, having an abortion is serious and poses risks of injury and death. A minor does not have the reasoning ability to consider all of the consequences of a permanent action for a temporary condition. A relative stranger cannot accurately assess the needs of this minor girl.

Teenagers often exaggerate and say, “my parents will kill me if. . . .” but this is an exaggeration. Most often, parents are upset when learning of unpleasant information but they love their children and, ultimately, want to help them navigate difficult situations.

I urge you to rightfully prioritize parental rights and vote in favor of Senate Bill 0891.

Thank you.