



September 26, 2021

The Honorable Dick Durbin  
Chair  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Grassley  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Durbin and Grassley:

On behalf of the American College of Physicians (ACP), I want to express our support for the recently passed House bill, H.R. 3755, the *Women's Health Protection Act of 2021*. That bill would protect a person's ability to determine whether to continue or end a pregnancy and to protect the health care clinician's ability to provide abortion services. Moreover, it seeks to protect physicians' and other health care clinicians' ability to deliver abortion services free from medically unnecessary restrictions such as waiting periods, biased counselling and admitting privilege requirements for clinicians. On the Senate side, fellow Committee Member Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) has co-introduced a companion bill, S. 1975, the *Women's Health Protection Act of 2021*, along with Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), to address these restrictions. ACP urges your consideration and passage of this legislation.

The American College of Physicians is the largest medical specialty organization and the second-largest physician membership society in the United States. ACP members include 161,000 internal medicine physicians (internists), related subspecialists, and medical students. Internal medicine physicians are specialists who apply scientific knowledge and clinical expertise to the diagnosis, treatment, and compassionate care of adults across the spectrum from health to complex illness. Internal medicine specialists treat many of the patients at greatest risk from COVID-19, including the elderly and patients with pre-existing conditions like diabetes, heart disease and asthma.

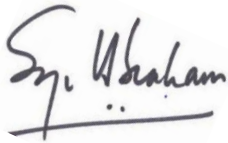
In May of 2021, the state of Texas passed the [Texas Heartbeat Act](#), which the Supreme Court allowed to go into effect this month even as the law is being [challenged](#) in the lower courts. This new law does grave harm to the ability of Texans to access needed health care services, denies women their right to make decisions about their own health, and fundamentally violates the relationship between a patient and their physician. It creates a precedent for other states to enact and seek to implement similarly [harmful laws](#), as several have already done. The law immediately denies women in Texas their established constitutional right to abortion services and their autonomy to make decisions about their personal health, including reproductive health. It egregiously interferes with the patient-physician relationship, by creating an

unacceptable and unprecedented ability for private citizens to take legal action against physicians who fulfill their obligations to their patients by counseling them on the full range of health care services available to them or providing necessary care to them.

ACP respects the principle of patient autonomy on matters affecting the patient's individual health and reproductive decision-making rights, including whether or not to continue a pregnancy as defined by existing constitutional law. We urge lawmakers, policymakers, and institutions to preserve the principles of patient autonomy regarding reproductive decision-making rights. With the Texas law having gone into effect in the state of Texas, great harm has been done to patient autonomy and the patient-physician relationship.

ACP urges the Committee and Senate to support passage of S. 1975 and H.R. 3755. These bills help to create a national safeguard to burdensome and overly restrictive laws that target and harm patients. Policymakers should refrain from attempting to mandate if, when, and how physicians can provide patients with the care they need. Lawmakers should refrain from legislating medical practice, and it is time for all lawmakers to recognize that reproductive health care is a critical part of comprehensive health care for all patients. Our member physicians advocate for patients every day and in many ways to preserve patient autonomy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George M. Abraham". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

George M. Abraham, MD, MPH, FACP, FIDSA  
President