

The Honorable Bill Galvano
President
The Florida Senate
305 Senate Building
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

The Honorable Jose Oliva
Speaker
Florida House of Representatives
513 The Capitol
402 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Dear President Galvano and Speaker Oliva,

We, the undersigned, are writing to urge the Florida Legislature not to pass HB 265/ SB 404 requiring teens to obtain parental consent prior to receiving an abortion. Our first priority must be to keep our teens safe. This legislation would do just the opposite.

The truth is, most teens already seek the counsel of a parent or guardian when it comes to a decision like this. If they don't, there's usually a good reason. That's why leading health and medical professionals oppose these laws. Parents want to be involved in their teenagers' lives but good family communication can't be imposed by lawmakers.

This legislation puts those vulnerable teenagers – those who most need protection – in harm's way, or forces them to go to court. These teens don't need a judge, they need a counselor.

According to the Guttmacher Institute, 90 percent of 14-year-olds and 74 percent of 15-year-olds surveyed said they involved at least one parent or guardian in their abortion decision. Those young people who didn't cited that they were worried that they may be thrown out or experience other abuse by their guardian.

One study found that of the young people who do not seek advice from parents, nearly half—45 percent—experience significant negative consequences when a parent finds out about pregnancy, from punishment to abuse to being forced to leave the home.

It should come as no surprise that health care professionals from the American Medical Association, the Society for Adolescent Medicine, the American Public Health Association, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and other organizations of health professionals oppose mandatory parental involvement in abortion decision making.

The American Medical Association recognizes that requiring parental involvement when youth seek sensitive health services can be counterproductive. The Society of Adolescent Medicine recommends adolescents be allowed to give consent for all or some types of health care and to have their confidentiality protected in the provision of that care, and the American Academy of Family Physicians agrees it is essential that adolescents have access to confidential health care.

While each of us has our own strongly held views about abortion I think we can all agree we must prioritize keeping our young people safe. While that may be the intent of this legislation's sponsors the medical community has established it would, unfortunately, have the opposite effect.

We hope you will take the input of the medical community into consideration as this bill is considered during the legislative session. If there is any additional information we can provide or if you would like to arrange a time to speak with any of our representatives please contact Laura Hernandez at 786-547-0087 or laura.hernandez@ppsenfl.org

Thank you in advance for your consideration on behalf of Florida's vulnerable teens.

For our health,

The Florida Alliance of Planned Parenthood Affiliates

Florida Latina Advocacy Network, National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health

National Institute for Reproductive Health

Equality Florida

Progress Florida

Organize Florida

National Abortion Federation

ACLU of Florida

Florida Interfaith Coalition for Reproductive Health and Justice

Power U Center for Social Change

Florida League of Women Voters

Florida National Organization for Women

UCF College of Medicine Reproductive Health Interest Group

Dr. Rachel Rapkin

Presidential Women's Center

National Council for Jewish Women

UniteWomen.Org

Women's Movement Now Miami

Emergency Medical Assistance, Inc. (EMA)

Democratic Women's Club of Florida

Pinellas National Organization for Women

National Council of Jewish Women Tallahassee Action Team

Broward Pro-Choice Coalition

Jacksonville Chapter of National Organization for Women

League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area

CODEPINK

Women's Alliance of Southwest Florida

We Are Here, Antonio Lyons

Indivisible Mandarin

Gainesville Chapter of National Organization for Women

Generation Action Florida State University

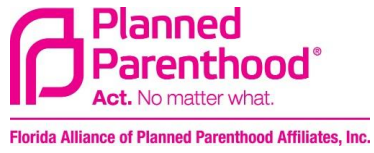
Generation Action Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University

Generation Action University of Florida

Generation Action University of Central Florida

Generation Action New College Florida

Generation Action Florida Atlantic University



Generation Action Miami-Dade College Wolfson Campus

Generation Action Stetson

Generation Action University of Miami

Generation Action, Florida Southern College

Generation Action University of South Florida

Generation Action Eckerd