



Michigan

House Health Policy Committee

Senate Bills 1198 – Oppose

November 4, 2018

The ACLU of Michigan supports expanding access to health care across the state to underserved areas through the advancement of telemedicine. However, we oppose Senate Bill 1198 on that grounds that it aims to exclude abortion care from those advances, with no medical basis for doing so.

SB 1198 is intended to further restrict a woman's access to abortion. Medical experts like the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists¹ and American Medical Association² oppose this type of restriction because it's meant to block access to care with no medical basis. Years of research have proven the safety and effectiveness of evidence-based medication abortion regimens.³

When challenged, State and Federal courts have ruled bans on medication abortion through telemedicine unconstitutional because they are burdensome and provide few, if any, health benefits for women who have made the decision to have an abortion.⁴⁵

In our state, more than a quarter of our counties don't have a single practicing OB/GYN physician. Rural women are more likely to be farther from health services and may have to travel substantial distances to access care. For those women, this legislation cuts off a safe option for early, medical abortion.

Legislatures across the country, including here in Michigan, have made it more and more difficult for women to access and afford birth control and reproductive health care. Overwhelming evidence proving that medication abortion through telemedicine is safe demonstrates that bills like SB 1198 are about limiting a woman's access to abortion care, not about helping women. If lawmakers truly want to help reduce abortions, you will put aside politics and commit to sound policy that increases access for women and families to receive quality reproductive health services.

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¹ <http://www.acog.org/Resources-And-Publications/Committee-Opinions/Committee-on-Health-Care-for-Underserved-Women/Increasing-Access-to-Abortion>

² <http://www.benefitspro.com/2016/03/30/telemedicine-offers-hope-for-abortion-rights-advoc>

³ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3518368/>

⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/19/iowa-telemedicine-abortion-legal>

⁵ <https://mhealthintelligence.com/news/idaho-revises-anti-abortion-telemedicine-legislation>