

## H.3408: The "Refusal of Care" Act- Real Life Examples

### Overview of the bill:

The "Refusal of Care" Act – also called the "Freedom of Conscience" Act - would allow health care professionals and institutions to deny patients information and services about their reproductive health. The language of this bill is so broad that it allows anyone to deny services for any reason – even prejudice.

- Julia enters the ER with a terrible stomach ache. After waiting for 2 ½ hours, she is finally seen by a nurse, who performs an ultrasound and quickly runs to get a doctor. "You have an ectopic pregnancy," he says "That's when the egg has implanted in the fallopian tube. Because there is still a heartbeat, I refuse to remove the egg." Julia asks for another physician, and waits for 3 hours while another physician is found who will perform an operation to remove the ectopic pregnancy. During those 3 hours, her fallopian tube ruptures, forcing the doctors to perform a hysterectomy and removing all chances of future pregnancies.
  - Catherine's menstrual cycles have always been heavy. Her doctor believes that Catherine is becoming anemic, and prescribes birth control to help regulate her cycles. Catherine, 25, quickly visits her local pharmacy to fill the prescription. During informal conversation, the Pharmacist learns that Catherine is not married. He refuses to dispense Catherine's medication because of his belief in no premarital sex.
  - Madison is 13 years-old, and had her first period last week. Her mother, Amy, decides that it is time for Madison to have her first gynecologist appointment so that she can ask questions and learn more about the changes her body is going through. Amy calls her doctor's office to make the appointment, but the receptionist won't help make an appointment for Madison. She says that she is ideologically opposed to sex before marriage and refuses to admit any patients for pelvic exams under the age of 21 or who are unmarried. She refuses to make any appointment for Madison.
  - Peter and Lynne have been married for 4 years, and have spent the last 2 trying to get pregnant. Their unsuccessful attempts have put a strain on their marriage, but they are optimistic as they begin their first round of InVitro Fertilization (IVF). This expensive process requires several treatments at specific intervals to induce ovulation and create a hospitable environment for a pregnancy. Peter escorts Lynne to her 2nd appointment, where they are informed that the Physician's Assistant on call that day won't dispense IVF drugs because he is opposed to "procedures relating to a developing child in an artificial womb." This will put them behind on their fertilization medications, potentially causing the major problems in their fertility schedule, making it less likely that the treatments will result in a successful pregnancy.
- What You Can Do**
  - These are examples of the negative impacts H. 3408 – The "Refusal of Care" Act could have on patients in South Carolina
  - Tell your legislator to "VOTE NO" on H. 3408. Visit [www.tellthemsc.org](http://www.tellthemsc.org) and send a message to your legislators.