

## **SB23-189 Increasing Access to Reproductive Health Care – Strongly Support**

March 28, 2023 Colorado House Health and Insurance Committee

Madam Chair (Rhonda Fields) and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Thalia Oster and I am a **volunteer lobbyist for the Colorado League of Women Voters' Legislative Action Committee.**

For 103 years, The League of Women Voters has been a nonpartisan organization with the mission of encouraging informed and active participation in government and influencing public policy through education and advocacy.

The League supports the constitutional right of privacy of an individual to make reproductive choices. The League also believes that every US resident should have access to a basic level of quality reproductive health care at an affordable cost, including abortion.

**The Colorado LWV's position** is exemplified in the CO Reproductive Health Equity Act, signed into law in 2022, that codifies protections for the full range of reproductive care, including abortions, and makes it so that a fertilized egg, embryo, or fetus does not have personhood rights under Colorado law.

SB23-189 as currently amended, makes reproductive health care more accessible and affordable. This bill specifically includes care for sexually transmitted infections including HIV, and abortion care. It also requires large employer plans (and some smaller or individual plans) to provide these services without being subject to deductibles, coinsurance or copays.

And because it also gives minors accessing this care more protections, the League respectfully requests that you support this bill.

Thank you,

Thalia Oster  
Gunnison, CO  
740-258-3827

Colorado League of Women Voters  
Legislative Action Committee



March 28, 2023  
303 E. 17th Avenue  
Suite 400  
Denver, CO 80203

Madam Chair and members of the House Health and Insurance Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony in support of SB23-189. One Colorado supports this legislation because it increases access to reproductive health care services, which are critical to the health and well being of all Coloradans.

People seeking reproductive care and treatment for sexually transmitted infections deserve affordable, accessible, and transparent care. SB23-189 improves access to care by closing gaps in insurance coverage related to sexually transmitted infections and abortion care. Closing these gaps makes care more affordable and accessible for Coloradans, which improves health outcomes and protects public health.

This legislation is particularly impactful for LGBTQ+ people, who experience disproportionately high rates of STIs and are more likely to be low-income due to systemic discrimination. Further, LGBTQ+ people, and especially trans and gender nonconforming people, are less likely to seek health care due to discrimination, lack of provider knowledge, and cost. In fact, according to [Closing the Gap](#), a 2018 report on LGBTQ+ health in Colorado, 66% of LGBQ and 84% of transgender Coloradans reported cost as a barrier to accessing the health care they need.

Reducing barriers to care would improve the health of LGBTQ+ individuals and the health of our entire Colorado community. By reducing patient cost and expanding access to HIV medications, this bill is one of the many steps we can take to better address our community's needs. Thank you for your time, and I ask for your support of SB23-189.

Sincerely,

Meredith Gleitz (she/her)  
*Policy Manager*  
One Colorado

**Address**

303 E. 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Suite 400  
Denver, CO 80203

**Contact**

303-396-6170  
[info@one-colorado](mailto:info@one-colorado)

**Website**

[one-colorado.org](http://one-colorado.org)

**Social**

[@onecolorado](https://twitter.com/onecolorado)

House Health & Insurance  
 03/28/2023 Upon Adjournment  
 SB23-189 Increasing Access To Reproductive Health Care  
 Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Carla Rowland Against herself	<p>With Respect,</p> <p>I am a Mom and Nana to three beautiful children, ages 8, 6 and 3. I am concerned about the Colorado we are creating for them. They are growing up in a beautiful state that is becoming more and more radical. A Colorado that does not respect life. RHEA was passed and is already one of the most radical states regarding abortion. We allow the killing of children in the womb up to birth. What more do we want? You want now to assure that women do not have a true choice. The only choice, according to this legislation, is the choice to kill your child. This bill and the trio of bills being put forth titled "Increasing Access to Reproductive Healthcare" have one purpose-to take away a woman's right to choose to KEEP her child, care for it after birth and where she can receive assistance. The title of the bill is misleading. If you were truly for choice and increasing access to all inclusive reproductive healthcare, you would not be threatened by those who want to serve the preborn and those centers that take care of the mothers that choose life. I see that the abortion lobby is relentless, and competition is a threat. These bills are truly anti-woman. All life is precious and God-given. We will answer to the Creator for our actions either for or against human life. I understand that there is a threat to shut down debate on these bills. I hope that sanity will reign and that you will respect all opinions. I respectfully ask for a NO vote on this and the other two abortion related bills before you.</p> <p>Sincerely, Carla Rowland</p>
Michael Dennis Against herself	<p>Increasing Access to Reproductive Health Care is deceptive in the very title. Allowing access to abortion and then stating it is getting government out of a woman's decision is just another way to justify their motive to encourage death for the unborn and the denigration of women.</p> <p>Ignorance of self is not the answer to make women equal. Women can be many things in the modern world. They can be leaders in many vocations, to include families. No matter what the make-up of the family, life must be first. Sexuality between man and woman is the spark of creation. Abortion kills this very spark.</p> <p>To say that something is unduly prejudicial is to say it does not allow for the realization of good things for that group. Abortion is unduly prejudicial to everyone. It does not allow for families, and it tells them they are only valued for what they can provide economically.</p> <p>Let's not destroy our future. Say no to abortion and this legislation!                      Thank you for the time to speak.</p>
Diana Bara Against herself	<p>I oppose HB23-189 because it is harmful to minors and violates the Colorado Constitution, Section 50 of Article V that prohibits direct or indirect funding of abortions by the state of Colorado. HB23-189 allows</p>

	<p>minors access to contraceptives and other services, including abortion and sterilization, without parental knowledge or consent. It requires large employer plans to provide coverage for the total cost of abortion care without policy deductibles, copayments, or coinsurance. This bill requires payment for transportation through Medicaid to facilitate an abortion. The cost to cover these services will be passed onto the citizens of Colorado through higher insurance premiums and Medicaid taxes. By law the citizens of Colorado should be required to subsidize abortions. Our children need to be protected from state not their parents. Abortion is not reproductive health care nor is it family planning. Abortion is not birth control it is the prevention of life. The sponsors and supporters of this bill are not pro-choice they are pro-abortion.</p>
<p>Robert Conner Against themselves</p>	<p>Why is it that Colorado demands that divorced people must pay and give support to children until they are 19 years of age; they can participate in the persons upbringing and livelihood until 19. Yet.... this purposed idea undermines that responsibility. Whomever brought this forward does not represent the emancipation Law or the majority of the people.</p>
<p>Livia Talley Against themselves</p>	<p>Thank you for allowing me to express my concerns with Senate Bill 23-189. There is a lot I could say about this bill and why I oppose it. However, my primary concern is that it denies parents the right to consent or deny an abortion to their minor-aged daughter. Being just twenty years old myself, I know I still have a lot to learn, and a lot of serious decisions to make that I don't feel capable of deciding on without advice from the people who care about me most: my parents. And I certainly didn't feel any more capable to make informed decisions on certain matters even just two years ago. So it makes no sense to me why minors who aren't allowed to drink, open a private bank account, or work more than so many hours a week, are going to be allowed to make one of the most life-changing decisions of their lives without parental consent. I am appalled that this bill has come so far already in the state legislature. Please vote no on this radical bill.</p>
<p>Michele Chetham Against themselves</p>	<p>As a physician who has practiced both emergency and general pediatrics, I am deeply concerned with SB23-189, and respectfully request a no-vote on SB23-189.</p> <p>SB23-189 concerns: Making abortions "free" including transportation, with taxpayers' dollars, while doing nothing to improve the accessibility and cost for prenatal care/delivery shows a perverse set of priorities for the state of Colorado. What would positively impact infant/maternal mortality in our state would be promoting excellence in prenatal care and support for mothers.</p> <p>The state cannot and should not replace the role of parents in guiding their minor children when it comes to reproductive health decisions, in particular the serious health and moral issue of abortion. It is bad for children, families, and our communities.</p>

	<p>It is my sincerest hope that Colorado legislators will support accessibility and care for all pregnant women and especially those who chose LIFE for their unborn child, to improve infant/maternal mortality in our state, and not promote more barriers for the care and choices that pregnant women deserve. The conscience rights of parents and health care providers should be promoted, not thwarted.</p> <p>Please vote no on SB23-189.</p> <p>Sincerely, Michele Chetham, MD Pediatrician, Englewood CO</p>
Philip Sauser Against themselves	<p>SB 23-189 prohibits health insurance carriers from imposing any copays or coinsurance for STD care, sterilizations, contraceptives/devices, and abortion. It would allow minors to enroll in state-funded family planning services, including abortion, without parental consent. It mandates free transportation to and from abortion services for minors without their parent's knowledge or permission. Meanwhile it makes no such extra expanded benefits available to persons delivering their baby, nor toward prenatal or postnatal care. (See RHEA 2.0, by Thomas Perille MD)</p> <p>This bill caters to those who seek to kill their baby within the womb, while neglecting to support those who allow their baby to live. This is insane and barbaric.</p>
Annie Bridegroom Against themselves	<p>My name is Annie, and I have 11 years experience in primary care and pain management as a Physician Assistant. I urge all legislators to vote AGAINST 189. A "safe" abortion—where the hope is to stop one heart instead of 2—is not an act to take lightly, not an act to mandate elimination of communication within families, and not an act to ease access by eliminating regular copays or other routine medical bills. Furthermore, anything that hinders parents from protecting their children and leaning on an outsider, such as a government-directed medical clinic, breaks down the most important and positively influential relationship in that teen's life—the one with their parents—in favor of building a dependency on an outsider, an outsider who has not invested in them. This does a disservice to the youth and parents of our community by allowing a government-directed division within a family. I urge you all to vote against facilitating ease of access to abortion by dividing families.</p>
Patricia Crewse Against themselves	<p>Abortions should not be fully funded by taxpayers. Are we talking the people who come here from out of state because our laws are so lax? No matter, it is sad that you are considering this wide spread infanticide. What is your rational for making these abortions "free?" Someone pays and it should not be taxpayers.</p>
Constance Conner Against themselves	<p>I am opposed to this bill because it requires large employer plans, on and after January 1, 2025, to provide coverage for the total cost of abortion care without policy deductibles, copayments, or coinsurance.</p>

	<p>Individual and small group plans must provide this coverage if the federal department of health and human services confirms the state's determination that the coverage is not subject to state defrayal pursuant to federal law.</p> <p>This will increase insurance premiums.</p> <p>With the minor's consent, section 6 allows a health-care provider acting within the scope of the health-care provider's license, certificate, or registration to furnish contraceptive procedures, supplies, or information to the minor without notification to or the consent of the minor's parent or parents, legal guardian, or any other person having custody of or decision-making responsibility for the minor. Sections 7 and 8 expand the reproductive health-care program administered by the department of health care policy and financing ( state department) to include additional family planning services and family-planning-related services.</p> <p>A bill that would even suggest a minors consent on important life decisions is not appropriate is a breach of parental rights.</p> <p>Last but not lease the bill appropriates \$200,000 to the department for the family planning access collaborative and report.</p> <p>And Section 11 of the bill requires the department to convene a family planning access collaborative, on or before September 1, 2023, to advise the department in identifying access gaps that contribute to Coloradans lacking family planning access. The department shall publish its recommendations on or before December 15, 2023. The bill appropriates \$200,000 to the department for the family planning access collaborative and report.</p> <p>Sincerely, Connie Conner</p>
<p>Meg Kirkendall For themselves</p>	<p>Good morning Madame Chair and members of the committee. My name is Meg Kirkendall and I live in Fort Collins. I'm here today strongly urging you to support SB23-189.</p> <p>I'm a nanny to a 1 year old little lady who is currently napping in the other room. She's one of the reasons that I'm speaking with you today.</p> <p>I've never testified for a bill before and quite honestly, I was rather disengaged with politics for much of my life. But then Roe fell, and I couldn't be complacent anymore.</p>

	<p>I was working the day it fell and cried when I looked at the little human I was caring for. She was blissfully unaware, happily eating Cheerios.</p> <p>What kind of world would she grow up in? One that tells her that her body isn't her own? That, because she's a woman, she'll be persecuted for her decisions?</p> <p>This cannot be our future. We can't let that happen.</p> <p>Colorado has been a frontrunner in these efforts to provide safe, accessible and legal reproductive health care. SB-189 will close gaps in care and remove barriers to access. In Colorado our right to abortion is protected, but the ability to access and afford care is not, and that must change. It is important to remember legality and accessibility are two different things. This bill is a step in the right direction to expand access to care in Colorado.</p> <p>Thank you for your time. Please vote yes.</p>
<p>Deanne Adamson Against themselves</p>	<p>This is fiscally irresponsible. What this bill wants insurance to pay for are elective procedures and surgeries. I choose not to suffer the consequences of higher insurance rates so someone else can experience life as a different being. The spending needs to stop. The average tax paying, law-abiding citizen, cannot afford good health insurance and are deterred from accepting pay hikes and jobs that put them in a category that no longer qualifies them for "free" state provided medical assistance. The madness needs to stop and this is a good place for it to stop. If a person wants to end the life of their baby, that's their choice, not the taxpayer's choice. If a person wants to experiment with gender transitions that is their choice and medically unnecessary and I don't want to pay for that either. The system is heavy enough with all these burdens. Atlas is shrugging. Do something that reduces costs, taxes and fees. This bill is definitely a waste of time and money for all.</p>
<p>Mary Zenzen Against themselves</p>	<p>Dear Assembly Men and Women, SB23-189 is an extremely dangerous bill that should be rejected. It is a crime against citizens to force employers and insurers to cover the cost of abortions, transgender surgeries and sterilization services. As you know, these are elective surgeries and others should not be forced to pay for them through increased premiums, etc. By forcing others to pay for these dangerous elective surgeries, you force them to be complicit in any damage done. (For example, one OB-GYN that I know says we would not believe the physical damage done by abortion by Planned Parenthood -- where he ends up picking up the pieces.) Additionally, eliminating a parent's right to protect their children from dangerous, unnecessary, and life-altering surgeries (such as abortion, etc) is another crime against the citizenry and humanity. They must be stopped. Respectfully, please acknowledge the murder and mutilation that the</p>

	<p>State is pushing by forcing compliance and participation in these crimes against humanity. Please say 'no' to SB23-189.</p>
<p>Jennifer Bird Against themselves</p>	<p>Oppose SB23-189</p> <p>It is not the proper role of government to come between children and their parents. Healthcare provided to a child should come under the protection and consent of the child's parent.</p> <p>They aren't your kids. It's not your call. Oppose this bill.</p>
<p>Ann Herrold For themselves</p>	<p>My name is Ann Herrold and I'm here as a community member testifying in favor of Senate bill 188.</p> <p>As a child, I was heavily sexually abused. This led to me being put in several life-altering and occasionally life-threatening situations. I was molested by my extremely religious mother and in order to escape I sought an unsafe living situation. This resulted in me being raped and becoming pregnant.</p> <p>I cannot begin to express to you how bleak life without abortion access is. I know this because all of this happened to me in Wyoming, where there were no abortion clinics.</p> <p>I knew that giving birth was not something I ever wanted my body to go through. This wasn't the right thing for my body, life, mind, and everything. Suicide seemed like the only option. I set a date and made a plan to hang myself from the rafters of my parent's garage.</p> <p>In the few weeks leading up to the suicide date, I stopped eating and exercised excessively. I was so depressed that I wasn't sleeping. I assume that the amount of stress I was under aided in my miscarriage, the second most painful experience of my life. But also the most wonderful. I got to live.</p> <p>If abortions had been available in Wyoming, I would have chosen that option. It would have been less stressful and much safer. It would have made me feel like I was cared for, and that I got to determine what happened with my body. As a survivor of child sexual abuse, I know intimately what it feels like to have your body not be treated as your own. I believe that the lack of abortion care in our country demonstrates how little we care about owners of uteruses. We care very little for their bodies as well as their minds and lives.</p> <p>Increasing access to abortion care is vital to creating equity. Access to reproductive healthcare is a human right and not only saves lives but enhances quality of life.</p> <p>I also want to add that my ex-girlfriend is trans and I very much care for her well-being and healthcare. It's not only that gender-affirming care saves lives, it also enhances the quality of life. Enhancing quality of life is something we should be striving for as a society.</p> <p>Abortion and gender-affirming care are healthcare and healthcare is a human right.</p> <p>I urge you to support this bill.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>

--	--