

February 15, 2021

The Honorable Karen Fann
President
Arizona State Senate
1700 West Washington Street, Room 205
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Re: AMA Opposition to Senate Bills 1381 and 1457

Dear President Fann:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and our physician and medical student members, I am writing to express our strong opposition to Senate Bills (SB) 1381 and 1457, legislation that would criminalize the termination of pregnancy based on the reason for the termination. These bills represent a dangerous governmental intrusion into the practice of medicine.

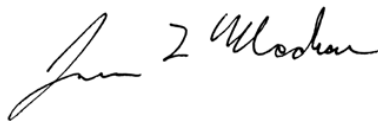
AMA member views on abortion are not homogenous, and it is our position that support of or opposition to abortion is a matter for physicians to decide individually, based on personal values or beliefs. However, we stand in strong opposition to any legislation that criminalizes the practice of medicine as SB 1381 and SB 1457 do. If enacted, these bills would subject physicians who provide legitimate medical care to felony charges, punishable by up to 10 years in prison and up to a \$20,000 fine. It is an alarming overreach for the government to define appropriate medical practice and regulate such practice through the use of criminal penalties.

Further, this legislation would severely compromise the patient-physician relationship, discouraging both physicians and patients from freely communicating about pregnancy for fear of criminal prosecution. The patient-physician relationship is foremost based on trust. Physicians must be free to have open and honest communication with patients about all aspects of health and safety and patients must feel safe knowing the information they share will be used only to inform physicians' best medical judgment. We believe it would be detrimental for the state of Arizona to legislatively undermine this trust and attach criminal consequences to communication within the patient-physician relationship.

Protecting the sanctity of the patient-physician relationship and clinical decision-making is a core priority for the AMA and a fundamental tenet of high-quality medical care. We strongly oppose any effort to criminalize physicians who provide legitimate medical services. We urge you and members of the Arizona State Senate to reject this unacceptable and dangerous governmental interference into the practice of medicine.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our views on this important matter. If the AMA can be of assistance, please contact Annalia Michelman, JD, AMA Advocacy Resource Center, at annalia.michelman@ama-assn.org.

Sincerely,



James L. Madara, MD

cc: Arizona Medical Association
Members of the Arizona State Senate