

Pennsylvania Supreme Court Reviews Abortion Rules

In some states, minors seem to need parental consent for body piercings—but not for abortions. Several family and legal groups have taken issue with that law.

Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) attorneys, along with Americans United for Life and ADF-allied attorney Randall Wenger, submitted a friend-of-the-court brief to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court in the first-ever review of a law requiring parental consent for a minor's abortion.

The Pennsylvania Family Institute, the Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation and 70 state legislators are among those who support the law protecting a parent's right to be involved in their child's decision regarding abortion.

"Parents should have a right to be involved in their child's critical life-changing decisions, and that includes abortions," says ADF Legal Counsel Matt Bowman. "Secret abortions performed on minors leave children in the hands of a predatory abortion industry that has put profits above parents' rights and the health and safety of young girls and their preborn children."

The Pennsylvania law and others like it have already been upheld at the U.S. Supreme Court. The ADF brief argues that a Pennsylvania trial court judge applied the correct legal standard and legitimately exercised his legal authority under the statute when he rejected a minor girl's request for a secret abortion, stating that she needed consent from at least one of her parents.

Here's the background: A girl in a lawsuit sought a judicial bypass that would have hidden the abortion from her parents. A

Pennsylvania trial court judge denied that bypass. While the law allows for a bypass in certain circumstances, it does not require rubber-stamp approval of every petition. The brief argues that a judge should have the freedom to carefully weigh the evidence and exercise proper discretion in allowing the parents a role in the abortion decision. At least one parent of the girl ultimately consented, permitting the abortion of their grandchild.

“Pennsylvania law appropriately requires that children obtain parental consent to get a body piercing in Pennsylvania, yet abortionists argue that these same children should be able to secretly kill their preborn babies in a risky medical procedure,” said Wenger, of the Independence Law Center, one of nearly 1,900 attorneys in the ADF alliance. “While the baby in this particular case can never be brought back, the law must be upheld so that Pennsylvania parents may protect their daughters from being victimized under the cover of darkness by the profiteers of death in the abortion industry.