

Christians Urge California Governor to Veto Bill Requiring Access to Abortion Pill at Colleges

Christian organizations are urging California Gov. Gavin Newsom to veto a bill that would require the state's public universities to offer abortion medication through campus health clinics.

If signed into law, the "College Student Right to Access Act," or SB 24, would take effect in January 2023. Newsom has until Sunday (Oct. 13) to make a decision.

Commonly known as "the abortion pill," the prescription medication provides a nonsurgical process to end early pregnancy for women who are less than 10 weeks along by blocking hormones needed to sustain the pregnancy. While groups like the California Family Council claim the medication can be dangerous, scientific research asserts that it is safe and effective.

State Sen. Connie Leyva, a Democrat who authored the bill, said the legislation "reaffirms the right of every college student to access abortion."

"By ensuring abortion care is available on campus, college students will not have to choose between delaying important medical care or having to travel long distances or miss classes or work," she said in a statement.

Former California Gov. Jerry Brown vetoed a similar bill last year, saying such services were already "widely available" to students. Newsom, however, spoke in favor of the bill on the campaign trail.

Andrew Rivas, executive director of the California Catholic Conference, is advising people to pressure Newsom into vetoing the bill, which Rivas described in a statement as “unprecedented and unnecessary.”

The California Catholic Conference drafted a letter that people can submit to Newsom’s office. This piece of legislation, the letter states, is “written in such a way to exclude pro-life counseling.”

The bill “purposely narrows a young woman’s choices,” said Rivas.

The California Family Council, an organization that works to “protect and foster Judeo-Christian principles in California’s laws,” urged its followers to call Newsom to discourage him from signing the bill.

Jonathan Keller, president of the California Family Council, criticized the state Assembly vote that moved the bill forward. He said it was just a way to “score points with Planned Parenthood.”

Catholics this summer were also called to pray as part of a statewide novena Aug. 3-11 that sought the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe to stop the legislation.

Bishop Jaime Soto of the Diocese of Sacramento initiated the prayer and said in a letter to diocese members that the bill is an “unprecedented intrusion on university campuses. It is unnecessary and only serves to further indoctrinate the young to the ideology of abortion.”

The Archdioceses of Los Angeles and San Francisco along with the Dioceses of San Bernardino and Orange were among those that participated in the prayer.

It’s estimated that up to 519 students at University of California and California State University campuses seek

medication abortions every month at off-campus health care sites, according to a 2017 report by a UC San Francisco research group. {eo}

© 2019 Religion News Service. All rights reserved.