

Date: February 10, 2015
To: The Kentucky General Assembly
Re: Opposition to SB 4 and SB 7

The National Association of Social Workers Kentucky Chapter is a professional group of 1600 Social Workers serving thousands of clients and patients across the state. Social Workers have a unique and nuanced understanding of how restricted services and limits to personal decision making affect individuals, their families, and their local communities.

The NASW *Code of Ethics* states that “social workers promote clients’ socially responsible self-determination” (p.5). Self determination related to reproductive health means that without government interference, people can make their own decisions about sexuality and reproduction. As social workers, we support the right of individuals to decide for themselves, without duress and according to their own personal beliefs and convictions, whether they want to become parents, how many children they are willing and able to nurture, the opportune time for them to have children, and with whom they may choose to parent.

To support self-determination, these reproductive health services, including abortion services, must be legally, economically, and geographically accessible to all who need them. Denying people with low income access to the full range of contraceptive methods, abortion, and sterilization services, and the educational programs that explain them, perpetuate poverty and the dependence on welfare programs and support the status quo of class stratification.

The NASW position concerning family planning, abortion, and other reproductive health services is based on the bedrock principles of self determination, human rights, and social justice:

- Every individual, within the context of her or his value system, must have access to family planning, abortion, and other reproductive health services.
- Public policies and legislation, nationally and internationally, must support a woman’s authority over her sexual life and reproductive capacity, free from coercion, violence, and discrimination.

NASW supports:

- a woman’s right to obtain an abortion, performed according to accepted medical standards and in an environment free of harassment or threat for both patients and providers.

Therefore, NASW

- opposes restrictions designed by politicians to limit access to reproductive health services, including abortion services.
- opposes any special conditions and requirements imposed on reproductive health care providers, such as the prescribed warning of unsubstantiated health risks from abortion or mandatory waiting periods, and un-necessary ultrasounds, which are not based on medical standards.

If you have any questions regarding this written testimony, please feel free to contact me at 502-352-2220 or mjohnson@naswky.com.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Executive Director

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