

2014 -- S 2376

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2014

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A N A C T

RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY

Introduced By: Senators Crowley, Metts, McCaffrey, and Goodwin

Date Introduced: February 12, 2014

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 23 of the General Laws entitled "HEALTH AND SAFETY" is hereby
2 amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 4.13

4 ABORTIONS SOLELY AS A MEANS OF SEX SELECTION

5 **23-4.13-1. Definitions.** -- For purposes of this chapter the following definitions apply:

6 (1) "Abortion" means the use or prescription of any instrument, medicine, drug, or any
7 other substance or device to terminate the pregnancy of a woman known to be pregnant, with an
8 intention other than to: increase the probability of a live birth, to preserve the life or health of the
9 child after live birth, or to remove a dead unborn child who died as the result of natural causes in
10 utero, or accidental trauma or a criminal assault on the pregnant woman or her unborn child
11 which causes the premature termination of the pregnancy.

12 (2) "Attempt to perform an abortion" means to do or omit to do anything that, under the
13 circumstances as the actor believes them to be, is an act or omission constituting a substantial step
14 in a course of conduct planned to culminate in an abortion. Such substantial steps include, but are
15 not limited to:

16 (i) Agreeing with an individual to perform an abortion on that individual or on some
17 other person, whether or not the term "abortion" is used in the agreement, and whether or not the
18 agreement is contingent on another factor such as receipt of payment or a determination of
19 pregnancy.

1 (ii) Scheduling or planning a time to perform an abortion on an individual, whether or not
2 the term "abortion" is used, and whether or not the performance is contingent on another factor
3 such as receipt of payment or a determination of pregnancy. This definition shall not be construed
4 to require that an abortion procedure actually be initiated for an attempt to occur.

5 **23-4.13-2. Abortion as a means of sex selection.** -- No person shall intentionally
6 perform or attempt to perform an abortion with knowledge that the pregnant woman is seeking
7 the abortion solely on account of the sex of the unborn child. Nothing in this chapter shall be
8 construed to proscribe the performance of an abortion because the unborn child has a genetic
9 disorder which is sex-linked.

10 **23-4.13-3. License suspension or revocation.** -- A physician who intentionally performs
11 or attempts to perform an abortion unlawful under § 23-4.13-2 herein shall be considered to have
12 engaged in unprofessional conduct, and his or her license shall be subject to suspension or
13 revocation by the State Board of Medical Licensure and Discipline in accordance with procedures
14 provided under chapter 37 of title 5.

15 **23-4.13-4. Civil damages for abortions as a method of sex selection.** -- Any woman
16 upon whom an abortion unlawful under § 23-4.13-2 was performed, the father of the unborn child
17 who was the subject of such an abortion, (unless the pregnancy resulted from the father's criminal
18 conduct), or the grandparent of such an unborn child, may maintain an action against the person
19 who performed the abortion for treble damages, and an additional ten thousand dollars (\$10,000)
20 in punitive damages. No person shall estopped from recovery in such a suit on the grounds that
21 either the plaintiff or the person upon whom the abortion was performed gave consent to the
22 abortion. Any contract of indemnification for such damages is hereby declared null and void.

23 **23-4.13-5. Injunctive relief.** -- A cause of action for injunctive relief against any person
24 who has knowingly violated the provisions of this chapter may be maintained by the woman upon
25 whom the abortion was performed or attempted in violation of § 23-4.13-2 any person who is the
26 spouse, parent, guardian, conservator, or a current or former licensed healthcare provider of the
27 woman upon whom an abortion has been performed or attempted in violation of § 23-4.13-2; or
28 by the office of the attorney general. The injunction shall prevent the abortion provider from
29 performing further abortions in violation of § 23-4.13-2.

30 **23-4.13-6. Attorney's fees.** -- If judgment is rendered in favor of the plaintiff in an action
31 described in this chapter the court shall also render judgment for a reasonable attorney's fee in
32 favor of the plaintiff against the defendant. If judgment is rendered in favor of the defendant and
33 the court finds that the plaintiff's suit was frivolous and brought in bad faith, the court shall also
34 render judgment for a reasonable attorney's fee in favor of the defendant against the plaintiff.

1 **23-4.13-7. Exclusion of liability for woman who undergoes abortion. --** No action
2 under this chapter may be brought against any woman upon whom an abortion was performed or
3 attempted in violation of this chapter.

4 **23-4.13-8. Privacy of woman upon whom an abortion is performed or attempted. --**
5 In every proceeding or action brought under this chapter, the anonymity of any woman upon
6 whom an abortion was performed or attempted in violation of this chapter shall be preserved from
7 public disclosure unless she gives her consent to such disclosure. The court, upon motion or sua
8 sponte, shall issue orders to the parties, witnesses, and counsel, and shall direct the sealing of the
9 record and exclusion of individuals from courtrooms or hearing rooms, to the extent necessary to
10 safeguard her identity from public disclosure. In the absence of written consent of the woman
11 upon whom an abortion was performed or attempted in violation of this chapter, anyone who
12 brings an action under this chapter shall do so under a pseudonym.

13 **23-4.13-9. Construction. --** (a) Nothing in this chapter shall be construed as creating or
14 recognizing a right to abortion.

15 (b) It is not the intent of this chapter to make lawful an abortion that is currently
16 unlawful.

17 **23-4.13-10. Severability. --** If any provision, word, phrase, or clause of this chapter or
18 the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not
19 affect the provisions, words, phrases, clauses or applications of this chapter which can be given
20 effect without the invalid provision, word, phrase, clause, or application and to this end, the
21 provisions, words, phrases, and clauses of this chapter are declared to be severable. If the
22 application of this law to the period of pregnancy prior to viability is held invalid, then such
23 invalidity shall not affect its application to the period of pregnancy subsequent to viability.

24 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 1 This act would ban abortions performed solely as a means of sex selection.
- 2 This act would take effect upon passage.

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