

News Releases

Preventing Coerced Abortions



RAATZ ROUNDUP

STATE SENATOR

JEFF RAATZ

DISTRICT 27

THE RAATZ ROUNDUP

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Preventing Coerced Abortions

By State Sen. Jeff Raatz (R-Richmond)

No one has the right to coerce a woman to receive an abortion and end the life of her unborn child. A study from [Heartbeat International](#), a pro-life pregnancy resource provider, [reports](#) that 64% of women say they felt pressured to seek an abortion, and 84% of women weren't sufficiently informed before an abortion was performed. For this reason, I supported [House Enrolled Act 1217](#) this session, which will make it a Level 6 felony to knowingly or intentionally pressure a woman to have an abortion and ensure proper information is given to pregnant women before an abortion is performed.

HEA 1217 will require abortion practitioners to inform a patient, at least 18 hours before a scheduled abortion, that it is illegal to force her to go forward with the procedure and ask the woman if she is being coerced to have an abortion.

Coercion is a defined and practiced legal term for courts, and judges will know how to implement this bill in prospective cases. Under [McElfresh v. State](#) (2016), the Indiana Supreme Court wrote, "under the obstruction of justice statute, the term 'coercion' 'carries with it, at a minimum, the sense of some form of pressure or influence being exerted on the will or choice of another'."

If a scheduled procedure is believed to be coerced, HEA 1217 requires medical staff, including abortion practitioners, to immediately report the case to law enforcement for investigation. Not reporting a case will be a Class C infraction. The legislation also

prohibits practitioners from performing an abortion on a patient 24 hours after receiving specific and credible information that a woman is being coerced.

Pressuring a woman to receive an abortion can place the mother and unborn child in a fatal situation. That is why I believe this legislation is a step toward further protecting Hoosier mothers and children, and showing women in extremely difficult situations that there is another option.

If you have any questions or concerns on this or other topics, feel free to contact me at Senator.Raatz@iga.in.gov or 317-233-0930.

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