



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF FLORIDA

March 10, 2016

PRESIDENT

Pamela Goodman

The Honorable Rick Scott
Governor, State of Florida
PL01, The Capitol
Tallahassee, FL 32399

First VICE PRESIDENT

Patricia Brigham

Dear Governor Scott,

TREASURER

Theresa Francis-Thomas

With March being Women's History Month, it is a good time to reflect on the strides made by women throughout this nation. It is also a good time to fight any attempts to revert those advances. The War on Women has continued this Session with two bills that will have devastating consequences for women all across the state. We implore you to use the power of your pen to veto these terrible bills, HB 1411 and SB 668:

SECRETARY

Patricia Drago

1. HB 1411 Termination of Pregnancies

This bill would enact similar measures to those passed in Texas, making it harder for women to have access to safe and legal abortion. The new restrictions that would be placed on health centers would undoubtedly cause many of those centers to shut down across the state, further limiting women's access to a safe and legal medical procedure.

State law already prevents public money being used to fund abortions. The language in this bill is meant to specifically target one group, and that is Planned Parenthood. The fact remains that abortion is a very small portion of the services that Planned Parenthood provides; they provide birth control, STI testing, preventative care like mammograms and more for tens of thousands of underserved women and men in our state.

The component of HB 1411 regarding gestation periods is also unfounded by science. While the second and third trimesters have been identified by physicians as starting at 14 and 28 weeks, this legislation arbitrarily defines those trimesters as beginning at 12 and 24 weeks, respectively.

2. SB 668 Family Law

Three years ago, you vetoed an alimony bill similar to the one currently on your desk, due in part to that bill's retroactive component. We ask you use that same judgement and veto this bill. Proponents of SB 668 have stated that this year's bill does not contain retroactive language; that is simply not true. The language allows a modification hearing in the event a payee receives a 10% increase in income.

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540 Beverly Court
Tallahassee, FL
32301-7530
(850)224-2545

If, say, a couple divorced 10 years ago and the husband was ordered to pay alimony. The couple was married for over 20 years, and the couple decided that the wife would stay at home to care for their children. As a result, she has few marketable job skills, and is making \$10 per hour. Were she to receive a dollar raise, her ex-husband would be entitled to a modification hearing, and could pay her ex-husband's attorney fees if she objects to the modification.

Why is there still no socio-economic analysis showing the need for this bill? There has yet to be any economic analysis on the impact these bills will have on women and state social services. Clearly the proper state fiscal analysis is missing, as well as the proper additional appropriations and funding for impacted state social services such as those provided under: F.S. 446.50 the Displaced Homemaker Trust Fund; Health and Human Services; Florida Children and Family Services; Food Assistance Programs; Elder Affairs programs; our Judicial System; affordable Legal Aid; public school "after-care" programs and the like. This is a tragic circumstance to have proposed legislation that will drastically impact women without any study whatsoever.

SB 668 was amended to include language for child time-sharing requirements. The amended language states that a judge must begin with the "premise" that children split time equally between both parents before considering any other factors.

A potential point of litigation and judicial problem with the amended child sharing language lies within the separation of power. It is an invasion of the court's province to instruct the court that it "*shall*" use a premise as a starting point in its findings of fact. In effect, the Legislature is telling the court what its findings of fact should be unless there is proof to the contrary. There is a significant body of study to the contrary that does not support such a premise as being in the best interest of the child universally and forcing parties to litigate it as a starting point. **Your veto of these bills will ensure that judicial discretion is not limited and judges will continue to make equitable decisions of how best to share support after a divorce.**

Under current law, there is no favor toward either parent. This approach focuses on the want of both parents to care for their child, rather than what is truly in the best interests of the child. It is for this reason that the Family Law Section of the Florida Bar has now stated that they are opposed to SB 668.

Please contemplate these points when considering your veto power on HB 1411 Termination of Pregnancies and SB 668 Family Law. Thank you for your leadership and your time on this matter.

Regards,



Pamela S. Goodman
President
League of Women Voters of Florida