Summary of Law Prohibiting Federal Funding for Family Planning Services

Text of Public Law 115-23 [based on H.J.Res. 43]:

“Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Congress disapproves the rule submitted by the Secretary of Health and Human Services relating to compliance with title X requirements by project recipients in selecting subrecipients (81 Fed. Reg. 91852; December 19, 2016), and such rule shall have no force or effect.”

Arguments for the Law:

Supporters say the legislation prevents taxpayers from subsidizing an organization that millions of them find morally reprehensible.

“Sadly, in a parting gift to the abortion industry, President Obama stole this freedom and flexibility and forced his own political agenda on states across the country,” House lead sponsor Black said in a statement. “While I am unapologetically pro-life, this bill is simply about states’ rights, and I am pleased to see President Trump putting the American people -- not bureaucrats in Washington -- back in the driver’s seat, empowering states like Tennessee to steer their Title X funds away from abortion-centric facilities like Planned Parenthood.” Source: Govtrack

Arguments Against the Law:

Opponents claim the legislation will jeopardize the health of millions of women, especially lower-income women and/or women of color. They also worry this could be among the opening salvos in an imminent bid to overturn Roe v. Wade, the 1973 Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion nationwide.

“Four million people depend on the Title X family planning program, and by signing this bill, President Trump disregards their health and well-being... Too many women still face barriers to health care, especially young women, women of color, those who live in rural areas, and women with low incomes,” Executive Vice President of Planned Parenthood Federation of America Dawn Laguens said in a statement. “Women marched in historic numbers the day after the inauguration because they feared the worst. Their worst fears are now coming true.”

Interpretation:

In December 2016 the Department of Health and Human Services enacted a rule that would have prevented individual states from withholding federal funds for “family-planning services.” By far the largest provider of family-planning services is Planned Parenthood. However, before the rule could go into effect, a federal judge blocked the rule.

In the event the rule survived its court challenge, congress passed H.J. Res.43/S.J. Res. 13. This bill would legally overturn the Department of Health and Human Services’ rule and allow states to withhold federal Planned Parenthood funding to clinics in their states. The bill passed the house 230-188 and the senate 51-50 becoming Public Law 115-23.
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Opponents also note that while Republicans’ primary criticism of Planned Parenthood is their abortion services, only 3 percent of their health care services performed relate to abortion. Not only that, but the longstanding Hyde Amendment prevents federal funds from going directly to abortions anyway. Federal funds directly support Planned Parenthood’s other services including STD tests, breast exams, pregnancy tests, and providing contraception. Source: Govtrack

How your congressman voted:

Area around Allegheny County
Mike Doyle (PA-14) - No
Charles Dent (PA-15) [this seat is currently vacant] - No
Lloyd Smucker (PA-16) - Yes
Matthew Cartwright (PA-17) - No
Tim Murphy (PA-18) [Now rep. by Conor Lamb] - Yes

Area around Philadelphia
Bob Brady (PA-1) - No
Dwight Evans (PA-2) - No
Mike Kelly (PA-3) - Yes
Scott Perry (PA-4) - Yes
Glenn Thompson (PA-5) – Yes

How your senator voted:

Bob Casey (PA) - No
Pat Toomey (PA) – Yes