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Nevada LIFE (Life Issues Forum and Education)

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Educating Nevadans on Life Issues...

Testimony of Don Nelson
Nevada LIFE (Life Issues Forum and Education)
Nevada State Senate Commerce and Labor Committee
April 29, 2003

Nevada LIFE opposes this bill as amended and passed by the Assembly (AB 144) and requests that a conscience clause be included that gives the pharmacist the right to refuse to dispense certain drugs which violate his or her conscience.

First, pharmacists should not be forced to dispense unnecessary drugs which violate their consciences. There are drugs which do violate the consciences of many pharmacists. Some of these drugs are abortifacients. They terminate newly conceived human life by preventing implantation. RU-486 called Mifeprex, is an intentional abortion drug causing abortions up to seven and sometimes nine weeks. Other drugs can be used to commit suicide. Forcing a pharmacist to dispense drugs which he knows will end a human's life is unethical and violates his conscience for the convenience of another person. None of the drugs that we are aware of which supporters of this bill want to be forcibly dispensed are medically necessary, nor are they difficult to obtain.

Second, this bill will create a hostile environment to pharmacists. Laws legislating against the morality of a substantial and vast number of pharmacists will not attract the best to Nevada. On the contrary, putting the conscience clause back in this bill fosters a favorable environment to attract the best pharmacists to our state. We already have a health care crisis here with a shortage of doctors. Bills like this, could add to that crisis. No pharmacist should be forced to choose between her job and her conscience. It is not in the interest of the state of pass laws that do so.

Finally, this bill does not treat the pharmacist with proper dignity. Pharmacists are professionals and as such abide by a code of ethics. This bill treats them as mere order takers and not the responsible ethical persons that they are and are required to be. In addition many of them are deeply religious. To ask them to divorce their religion from their work also fails to treat them with proper dignity, especially in these situations where the medication is medically unnecessary. In many instances, it treats the pharmacist and her religion with contempt.

Please amend this bill to contain a conscience clause to allow pharmacists to refuse to fill prescriptions for drugs which violate their consciences.

EXHIBIT G Committee on Commerce/Labor
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