



BIRTH CONTROL

Most of us take family planning for granted. **And, yet**, in 2010 and 2011, the Virginia House of Delegates overwhelmingly passed a “personhood” bill declaring that in the instant egg and sperm join, a person is created. *Anything* that destroys a fertilized egg becomes an abortion.

Supporters didn’t hide their intent to outlaw virtually every form of birth control – “the pill, patch, mini-pill, shot, vaginal ring, emergency contraception, intrauterine devices, etc.” Human Life Alliance 2011, 2012 – because each can prevent a fertilized egg from implanting in the uterus.

To make sure every House member knew what they were voting on, I offered an amendment to ensure it wouldn’t apply to FDA-approved birth control. That guarantee was summarily rejected and the bill passed 66 to 32.

It wasn’t until 1965 – the year my second child was born – that the U.S. Supreme Court finally ruled states couldn’t outlaw birth control. **We must preserve individual moral responsibility and not allow Virginians to be used as a test case to challenge the Supreme Court.**

EMERGENCY CARE

Women with a problem pregnancy – often wanting so much to have a baby – shouldn’t be denied full, compassionate, emergency medical services, especially if there is a miscarriage. **And, yet**, in 2012, the Governor signed into law that a doctor cannot act until an ultrasound is taken – *even if* there is not fetal heartbeat, *even if* the woman is hemorrhaging, *even if* she is under diabetic stress. The Virginia Medical Society strongly opposed such unprecedented intrusion on a doctor’s professional judgement.

Compassion for the 1 in 4 women who experience a miscarriage also was not the agenda of legislators who introduced bills to criminally punish any woman who does not keep the remains and report it to the police for investigation. **We must trust the health decisions of a woman and her doctor.**

ACCESS

Virginia became the brunt of national, late night TV jokes over last year’s ultrasound bill. **And, yet**, the embarrassment dragged on for over a week because supporters really didn’t know how ultrasound worked – they had no idea the bill would *mandate a transvaginal probe* well into the first trimester.

Such lack of knowledge often shows up in bills that aren’t really to protect women’s health but are to end abortions. For example, in Virginia, any abortion after the first 13 weeks must be in a hospital. Therefore, there was no need to put expensive hospital requirements on clinics – except to force them to close. With each clinic closure, low income women lose access to family planning, cancer screenings, and prenatal services.

We must maintain access to essential health services for all women.

