



BIRTH CONTROL

I was *incredulous* that a video of my defending access to birth control was used this June to assert my position on reproductive rights was extreme ?!

Most of us take family planning for granted. *And, yet*, here is a quote from a piece routinely handed out at the General Assembly

“the pill, patch, mini-pill, shot, vaginal ring, emergency contraception, intrauterine devices, etc... have the capability to cause an abortion” Human Life Alliance
because each can prevent a fertilized egg from implanting in the uterus.

The House majority has tried repeatedly to put that belief into law by passing “personhood” bills and refusing to protect FDA approved contraception. It’s that belief that drives federal action to eliminate funding for family planning or to allow employers not to include birth control in health plans.

It wasn’t until the year my second child was born that the Supreme Court finally ruled states couldn’t outlaw birth control. **We must preserve individual moral responsibility and not allow Virginia law to drive a test case before *today’s* 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*, under Virginia law 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.

Recently, a woman returning from her baby shower ran off the road. She was found face down on the pavement. She was 8 months pregnant. It was late at night. *And, yet*, Virginia law requires that *3 doctors must approve every medical decision* involving her or her baby’s life.

The instant a baby is born, the child has all the protections of any person who may need life support. In fact, in 2018, protocols developed by a select panel of doctors and hospitals were put into law so that they apply to all doctors and all hospitals. *And, yet*, the issue has been *inexcusably politicized*. There is no infanticide; in the last 2 decades, only 2 abortions after the 6th month have been reported in Virginia.



We must re-shape our criminal laws to trust the health decisions of a woman and her doctor.

ACCESS

Virginia became the brunt of late night TV jokes over requiring every woman to undergo a transvaginal ultrasound probe. *And, yet*, the embarrassment dragged on because supporters didn’t know how ultrasound worked. Such lack of knowledge often shows up in bills that aren’t really to protect women’s health but are to end abortions by limiting access in every way possible:

- 24-hour waiting periods particularly burden low income hourly workers living far from a clinic.
- Hospital building standards are costly and un-justified.
- Eliminating funding for Planned Parenthood clinics is designed to close their doors. 90% of their services are not related to abortion. With each clinic closure, low-income people lose access to family planning, routine physicals, vaccines, cancer screenings, and prenatal services.

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