



AAPLOGAction.org

Conscience Protections for Medical Residents Act

H.R.6219 by Rep. Greg Murphy, M.D. / S.3238 by Sen. James Lankford

For OB/GYN residents, training in induced abortion used to be opt-in – it was offered for those who wanted such training but not part of the mainstream curriculum nor required. In 2018, an opt-out system began to be enforced by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME). The ACGME is a non-profit organization that sets and monitors medical education standards required to obtain and retain accreditation for all graduate medical training residency programs in the United States. Accreditation has implications for federal funding that graduate medical education programs may receive.¹

Under the opt-out system, if residents do not want to train in abortion for any reason, they must approach those higher in authority than themselves, and who are responsible for their evaluations and future career trajectories, to opt out of such training. **To be clear, this training is in induced abortions, with the intent of ending the life of a preborn child. This does not incorporate standard training including treatment of miscarriages, ectopic pregnancies, pregnancy complications, and medical emergencies.**

What the bill does

The Conscience Protections for Medical Residents Act restores abortion training to an opt-in system. The bill requires residency programs to return to opt-in abortion training in order for graduate medical education programs to be federally funded. Some important points:

- This bill *does not* ban abortion training. Such training will still be available to medical residents who wish to receive it, but it will no longer be part of the standard curriculum.
- This bill would *relieve the coercive environment* OB/GYN medical residents face under the current opt-out system.
- OB/GYN medical residents *will still receive* the training necessary to provide actual healthcare for women, including treatment of miscarriages, ectopic pregnancies, pregnancy complications, emptying a uterus, and medical emergencies.

Please support the Conscience Protections for Medical Residents Act
– the next generation of life-affirming medical professionals depends on it!



AAPLOGAction.org

Additional Background

While opting out of abortion training should be straightforward enough, it can be accompanied by intimidation and retaliation. This shift has also fundamentally altered how abortion training is viewed. **This is dissuading medical students from pursuing obstetrics in order to avoid this clash of conscience with a desire to provide excellent healthcare to patients. This is bad for the medical profession and bad for patients.** Our country already is facing a healthcare access crisis – we must not disincentivize qualified students from pursuing medicine, and obstetrics specifically, due to implicit coercion and lack of comprehensive conscience rights protection.

As Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton stated in Opinion No. KP-0395, “[T]he Coats-Snowe Amendment prohibits state or local governments from receiving federal financial assistance from discriminating against a doctor or student who refuses to undergo induced abortion training, or against a graduate medical education program that refuses to provide or require training in the performance of induced abortions. 42 U.S.C. § 238n(a). Reliance on the ACGME standards, which require induced abortion training, is inconsistent with, and thus conflicts with, federal law.”ⁱⁱ The Coats-Snowe Amendment, enacted in 1996, prohibits discrimination against health care entities that refuse to provide or undergo training for induced abortion, with healthcare entities encompassing individual physicians, students in residency programs, and postgraduate physician training programs (residencies).

Solution

For the sake of the medical profession, we must return abortion training to an opt-in system, where such training is available for those who are interested but not mandatory and not mainstream. **AAPLOG Action also encourages the appropriate enforcement of the Coats-Snowe Amendment** for protection of medical students and schools that do not want to participate in or offer training in induced abortion.

AAPLOG Action will continue working through many avenues until abortion training is returned to an opt-in system, including through the federal appropriations process.

ⁱOpinion No. KP-0395, Office of Attorney General of Texas Ken Paxton from December 13, 2021. In this opinion, he states “There are many sources of federal funds for graduate medical education programs. See 42 U.S.C. § 1395ww (providing for graduate medical education payments in support of Medicare program); 38 U.S.C. § 7302 (providing for graduate medical education payments under Veterans Health Administration); 42 U.S.C. § 256e (providing for graduate medical education payments in support of children’s hospitals); 42 U.S.C. 256h (providing graduate medical education payments in support of teaching health centers).”

ⁱⁱOpinion No. KP-0395, Office of Attorney General of Texas Ken Paxton from December 13, 2021.