

## Testimony Toolkit

### Staying up to date with bills and dates.

- Create an account and Sign up for bill alerts.

### Legislative Overview:

As the bill makes its way through the legislative process, there are a few key steps where we can strategically interact with state representatives! First let's review how a bill becomes law. (add graphic where we can interact and where the bill can be killed)

1. The bill is introduced/sponsored by a member of congress. Stay up to date. Click here to learn more!
2. The bill is then assigned a committee where it may be amended, passed, or rejected. The committee will also hold public hearings where constituents can raise concerns in support or against the legislation.
  - a. Interaction Alert: Provide written and/or oral testimony. Click here to see our tips and templates!
  - b. If rejected here, the bill is "Killed."
3. If passed, the bill will be debated in the chamber of origin, house or senate. If passed, it will go to the second chamber for debate.
  - a. Interaction Alert: Call your representative. Send them emails. Interact with them on their social media. Click here for tips and templates!
  - b. If not passed on either house, the bill is "killed."
4. If passed in both houses, the bill will go to conference committee to merge the different versions of the bill.
  - a. If differences cannot be reconciled, the bill is "killed."
5. Then it is sent to the Governor's desk to be signed.
  - a. If Vetoed, the bill is "killed."

## Make your voice Heard! The Art of Testimony

### Testimony Tips

- Begin your testimony by acknowledging the Committee co-chairs, **Representative \*\*\* and Senator \*\*\***, the vice chairs, **Representative \*\*\* and Senator \*\*\***, and the ranking members **Representative \*\*\* and Senator \*\*\***. Then, state your name, your organizational affiliation (if any), and your position on the specific bill (support, partially support, oppose).
  - *Note:* Don't testify on behalf of your school, but do mention that you're a student at your specific institution and/or campus!
  - *Example:* "Dear Co-Chairs Senator X and Representative Y, and the distinguished members of the XYZ Committee. My name is A and I am a student at (your institution). I am testifying today in support of House Bill ###, Bill Title".

- Share your story personally about why this bill matters to you.
- Use facts! Add in relevant current data and research (potential data noted below in Fact Sheet).
- Be concise! Keep your oral testimony to the 3-minute limit and practice reading your testimony in advance.
- Bring a copy of your testimony!
- Written testimony may be longer and more formal.
- Be prepared to answer questions from members of the Committee. Most questions will be about your personal experience. If you do not know the answer to a question, you can always say: "I don't know. I would be happy to get back to you with that information."
- **Pro Tip!** Email a copy of your testimony to your legislators too - you can find who your State Representative and State Senator (and their emails) [here](#).

### Template testimony

Replace the yellow highlighted text below with your own writing, but don't feel pressured to follow this template—edit the text in any way you see fit! Delete this underlined text when you're drafting your testimony!

Dear Co-Chairs Senator \*\*\* and Representative \*\*\*, and the distinguished members of the \*\*\* Committee,

My name is [First name, Last name], and I am a student from [institution name] in [city or town]. I am [mention your organization or group affiliation, or other appropriate and relevant information]

I am testifying in strong opposition of HB2197.

### **Spend most of your time explaining why this issue is important to you. Consider:**

- *Why do you personally care about this bill?*
- *As a person of child bearing capacity, how does this affect you?*
- *As a physician how does this affect you or your ability to care for patients?*

**Speak briefly to 1-2 aspects of why legislators should oppose the bill and/or how it will make a difference in people's lives.** Consider backing up your statements with data and evidence (see below Fact Sheet)

### **Lastly, add a concluding statement and thank the committee.**

In conclusion, I urge you to oppose to this bill \*\*\*. I urge you to NOT vote this bill out of the \*\*\* Committee, as doing so is \*\*\*.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

[First & Last Name]

[Title- Student at a University, Organization, etc.]

[Email address (optional- you should be okay with this being public information)]

If it passes to the chamber of origin and to the second chamber...

**Let them know where you stand! Call your representatives!**

- Find out who your reps are!
- Remember they represent you!

### **Fact Sheet:**

Example from Idaho:

#### **Background**

- In 2020 Idaho passed one of the most [restrictive abortion laws](#) in the country
  - Permits abortion 1) only when necessary to prevent death of a pregnant individual or 2) in cases of rape and incest in the first trimester
  - Physicians who violate the law can face criminal and civil penalties, including up to five years in prison and \$20,000 in damages.
- The law was [preliminarily enjoined](#) by a federal district court in Idaho one day prior to going into effect
- For two brief periods, the injunction was stayed and the law was in effect in Idaho.
- The case was appealed to the Ninth Circuit and the Supreme Court,
  - On March 5th, 2025, the Ninth Circuit [agreed to dismiss the case](#) with the support of the Trump Department of Justice (Biden DOJ filed the case)
  - A similar case [enjoined the law](#) from enforcement on March 4th, 2025. Thus, the law is not currently in effect

#### **Physician Workforce**

- Idaho has lost [nearly 22%](#) of its practicing obstetricians since its restrictive abortion law was passed.
- Nearly 85% of these physicians practice in the [most populated metro areas](#), and many rural counties do not have a single employed licensed obstetrician, relying instead on independent contractors, consultants, and primary care providers.
- Idaho currently has [210 practicing obstetricians](#), many of whom work less than full time.
  - Idaho will need 275 obstetricians by 2028 to accommodate its growing population.
- Several hospitals have [closed their obstetrics department](#), and many more are at risk of closure due to an inability to recruit obstetricians.
- Idaho is one of the few states without a formal [obstetrics and gynecology \(OB-GYN\) residency](#), meaning there is not a sustainable pipeline of trainees that could mitigate the effects of its growing exodus of obstetricians.
- Idaho already has a primary care physician shortage.
  - 12% of women in Idaho report not having a [primary health care provider](#).
  - 13% have [avoided care due to cost](#), figures disproportionately represented by hispanic women.

## Reproductive Health in Idaho

- Since 2022, Idaho's [abortion rate has dropped](#) by more than 99%.
  - Only five abortions were performed in 2023, four of which were medication abortions, at a rate of just 0.013 per 1000 women aged 15 to 44.
  - In 2020, the state peaked at [1,6080 total abortions performed](#).
- In *St. Luke's Health System v. Labrador*, the plaintiff, Idaho's largest non-profit community health center, relayed the [deleterious nature](#) of Idaho's abortion ban.
  - During the period the abortion ban was not in effect, the plaintiff hospital airlifted out of state just one pregnant individual requiring emergency medical care.
  - During the extremely brief period the law was in effect, six pregnant patients at the plaintiff hospital required the same escalation of care.

## Impact of Fetal Personhood

- While the bill attempts to limit the application of fetal personhood to homicide, aggravated battery, and wrongful death claims, it is unclear to what extent a "preborn child" will be granted other legal protections extended to living humans.
- [One advocacy organization](#) has emphasized that "[f]etal personhood and pregnant people's personhood cannot coexist: fetal personhood 'fundamentally change[s] the legal rights and status of all pregnant women' and forces them to 'forfeit' their own personhood once fetal persons have taken up residence inside their bodies."
- States that have ratified fetal personhood in certain limited contexts, have seen it applied in other, [unrelated contexts](#).
  - Michigan, South Carolina, and Alabama state supreme courts have extended fetal personhood to wrongful death statutes by invoking fetal personhood in property, child abuse, and tort law.
  - Alabama, Oklahoma, and South Carolina courts have expanded criminal child abuse statutes to include fetuses within the definition of "child"
    - These decisions have increased prosecution against pregnant women, disproportionately [women of color](#) and low-income women
- States that have ratified fetal personhood have seen medical care denied to pregnant individuals or individuals that could become pregnant
  - **Contraception:** Days after *Dobbs*, the attorney general of [Missouri](#) and a hospital in [Kansas](#) indicated that contraception could be prosecuted under those states' abortion bans. If human life begins at conception, emergency contraception could be implicated in Idaho's extension of homicide laws to the "preborn child".
  - **IVF:** Because the bill does not limit the "preborn child" to embryos or fetuses in-utero, IVF could also be affected, and the disposal of embryos could be prosecuted as a homicide.
    - The [majority of states](#) with feticide laws limit their application to fertilized eggs in-utero.

- **Embryo Research:** Embryonic personhood also calls into question embryonic tissue and stem cell research, and the [American Society for Reproductive Medicine](#) has issued a warning to that effect.
- Embryonic and fetal personhood could affect [taxes, incarceration, population counts, and child support](#), among other issues, in various capacities, creating legal chaos within the state.

**Share on social media to inspire others!:**

- #Patientsoverpolitics to share they submitted testimony to encourage more ppl to submit testimony & tag @DoctorsForAmerica