

July 24, 2018

Suzanne Belatti

15413 NE Andra Pl.

Portland, Oregon 97230

Re: Financial Estimate Statement for IP 1

Dear Secretary Richardson and members of the committee:

I am commenting on the flawed conclusion of financial impact stated in the draft of Financial Estimate Statement prepared for Initiative Petition 1 (IP 1).

The data showing expenditures for publicly funded abortion are evidence based with information acquired directly through the OHP showing that in 2016 abortions were numbered at 3,769 with a cost of \$2,420,753 at a per procedure cost of \$642. The statements providing information of financial impact to taxpayers can be verified using this data as statements of fact. If this measure passes, at a minimum, taxpayers would no longer have this expenditure of somewhere around 2.5 million per year. With an anticipated increase in abortions due to expansion of abortion coverage provided by RHEA, the cost saving to Oregon taxpayers by eliminating this funding is significant.

It seems irresponsible, unverifiable, highly biased and misleading to draw conclusions on financial impact to the state taxpayer of women who seek other options and choose to carry their child to term because funding wasn't available for abortions. The Guttmacher institute shows that without state funding, 75% of women retain access to abortions and find resources to fund their abortions at a per procedure cost of \$642 on average, independently, thus access is not obstructed. The 25% of women who may choose to go to term have a highly variable means to do so and may in fact choose options that will never require state funding for services, such as parenting with their partner, accessing family resources and support, child support from the father, adoption and many other resources that are not pertinent to this discussion. If going down a rabbit hole of how funding or not funding abortion may impact financial costs of the state, then why not discuss impact of mental health or pre mature delivery of future births and the increased costs from those aspects?

The only factual impact of this measure is the direct cost to taxpayers for abortions covered. If this measure does not pass, then there is a projected increase in cost to taxpayers given the expansion of abortion coverage through RHEA which, if estimated increase is 5,000 abortions (number based on statements in this draft) annually funded would be an increase to taxpayers with a cost of around \$3.2 million dollars to fund abortions at a per procedure rate of \$642 based on 2016 numbers from report obtained through Oregon Health Authority. I respectfully suggest that just the basic facts of funding abortion at current rates versus not funding at expected increased rate of abortions be stated. Other conclusions are highly subjective and not verifiable, therefore misleading the public and breaching into an area that abortion funding is not related to.

Although it is important to look at potential financial impact on the state of low income births, it is highly repugnant to show an advantageous cost effectiveness of aborting low-income children as opposed to providing support to low income women and families who give birth. If we place a price tag on children born and show the cost effectiveness of not birthing alive, then we show a clear bias and discrimination toward ending poverty by eliminating the poor. The financial impact of banning state funding for abortion should remain a discussion of the merits of the cost of funding or not funding and not tread into the socioeconomic constraints and prejudices toward the poor and how that will be

financially managed. There is a difficult ethical correlation to wrestle with when comparing the cost of an abortion and the cost of providing care to mother and child. IP 1 is simply a vote to fund abortion or not fund abortion, not a welfare reform mandate.

There are entirely too many variables that cannot be qualitatively verified for accuracy with the statements that our government would see an increase of funding upwards of \$19 million if this measure passes. The draft states that financial impact on local government is indeterminate. Also stating that passage of the measure with “a corresponding increase in births could impact the cost of services provided by local units of government...These variables are not known at this time.” It is contradictory and conflicting to state outcomes are unknown and then concurrently state estimates as significant as multimillion dollar impacts as if they are directly relatable facts.

If the Voter’s Pamphlet is to provide “an impartial, simple and understandable statement explaining the financial effects of the measure” as stated in the Voter’s Pamphlet (ORS 250.125), the statement of financial impact needs to be greatly simplified. As it reads currently, there are complicated variables, biased prejudicial conclusions, and unverifiable outcomes that are indeterminate at this time. Please consider just sticking to the facts of the financial impact and showing cost of current abortions and cost of abortions with expected expansion of coverage as anticipated with impact of RHEA.

Thank you for your consideration. Thank you for your diligent time working on this important summary for the voter to better understand the measure without bias from businesses that will be financially impacted if it passes.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Belatti

Co-Chief Petitioner for IP 1

References:

1. Report obtained by an Oregon Health Authority information request: Number of Therapeutic Abortions funded by the OHP State Fiscal Years 2002-03 through 2015-16
2. <https://ifstudies.org/blog/why-poor-women-with-unintended-pregnancies-are-less-likely-to-get-abortions>
3. <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2018/03/welfare-childhood/555119/>
4. <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/12/a-different-approach-to-breaking-the-cycle-of-poverty/384029/>