



National Council of Jewish Women, Los Angeles
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**MORE THAN 100 FAITH LEADERS DECLARE SUPPORT FOR
THE REPRODUCTIVE FACT ACT**

Los Angeles, CA (Date: August 27, 2015) - As the California Senate returns to session, more than 100 faith leaders from across the state signed an open letter that urges political leaders to support the Reproductive FACT Act (AB 775).

The bill, authored by Assemblymembers David Chiu (D-San Francisco) and Autumn Burke (D-Los Angeles), requires unlicensed facilities that provide pregnancy-related services to disclose that they are not licensed medical providers. Licensed reproductive health clinics must notify patients that California has programs to help them access affordable family planning, abortion services and prenatal care. This includes so-called "crisis pregnancy centers," facilities run by anti-choice organizations that pose as comprehensive reproductive health clinics but work to block women from accessing abortion care.

The bill is sponsored by Attorney General Kamala Harris, NARAL Pro-Choice California and Black Women for Wellness. It passed the Assembly 49-26 in May, and will come before the Senate for a vote following the summer recess.

"The faith community in California encompasses a wide range of views on reproductive rights. The state can best support the freedom to express those views and bring them into practice by helping women access whichever health care they choose without burdensome cost or delay," reads the letter.

Sara Hutchinson Ratcliffe, Domestic Program Director at Catholics for Choice, said, *"As Catholics, we are called by our faith to listen to our conscience, to respect the right of others to do the same. Our social justice tradition compels us to advocate for the poor and marginalized, including those with limited options for healthcare services--especially low-income communities and those in rural areas. We support the FACT Act because it will ensure that California residents-particularly the most vulnerable-get the information they need to access affordable healthcare and make the best decisions for themselves and their families."*

Cipra Nemeth, Vice President of Legislative and Community Engagement of the National Council of Jewish Women LA, added, "*As a faith-based organization we strongly support the right of all women to make informed decisions. Women of every faith deserve respect, and the ability to make knowledgeable, fact-based choices for and by themselves. This is particularly important when it concerns issues of personal health.*"

Rev. Dr. Rick Schlosser, Executive Director of California Council of Churches IMPACT, responded to specious arguments from opponents of the bill that it violates religious freedom. "*We in the faith community who support women's reproductive rights do not see how inaccurate, even dangerous, medical information advances religious liberty. Let me be clear: this bill does not prohibit anyone's religious freedom. It protects religious freedom. No faith tradition with any integrity would disrespect women by withholding any of their options.*"

The letter concludes, "*We wish for our congregants and members to lead the lives that they determine for themselves to be the happiest and healthiest, in consultation with their families, doctors and faith communities. The Reproductive FACT Act allows them to do that without impediment.*"

A full copy of the letter with the list of signatories can be viewed here: <http://bit.ly/FaithLetterAB775>

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ABOUT NCJW/LA

The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) is a grassroots organization of volunteers and advocates committed to the welfare and well-being of the Los Angeles Community. Inspired by Jewish values, NCJW strives for social justice by improving the quality of life for women, children, and families and by safeguarding individual rights and freedoms. NCJW/LA serves more than 12,000 individuals through our Community Mental Health and Supportive Services, Scholarships, Talkline, Youth Educational Programs and Services, Back 2 School Store, intern training programs and our clothing assistance projects. NCJW/LA social justice programs provide education and legislative advocacy on issues that affect and impact women, children and families in the areas of children's rights, economic justice, healthcare, human trafficking, reproductive justice, LGBTQ, and gender related violence. All donations to our 8 Council Thrift Shops support the programs and services of NCJW/LA. NCJW/LA is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization (Tax ID #95-1641433).

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