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control vs. conscience
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Photo/Courtesy Tia Torhorst

Tia Torhorst is on the Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin board of directors and is treasurer for Women's Choice.

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Photo/Courtesy Rebecca Grassl Bradley

Rebecca Grassl Bradley is a Roman Catholic lawyer who is associate general counsel of RedPrairie Corp. in Waukesha.

your turn

Want to tell lawmakers what you think? Go to www.legis.state.wi.us/waml/ and tell them what you think about the Pharmacist's Conscience Clause, Senate Bill 155 and Assembly Bill 285.

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Points taken**Control vs. conscience**

Posted: Jan. 19, 2006

Two people face off on an issue, making their cases in 300 words or fewer. Have a topic you want to vent or read about? E-mail info@mkeonline.com.

Issue: Should the Legislature pass a Pharmacist's Conscience Clause that would allow pharmacists to refuse to fill prescriptions for certain drugs, including birth control, based on their beliefs?

Women deserve access to basic health care, not more moral policing**Tia Torhorst**

The Wisconsin Legislature is currently considering a bill that would allow a pharmacist to refuse to dispense my birth control prescription without providing a referral or a transfer to another pharmacy, regardless of whether the denial could harm my health.

This bill is egregious. It is bad for me, bad for women's health and bad for Wisconsin.

Doesn't the state have more important issues to deal with than denying my legal, safe and health-preserving medication? Will they next come knocking on my door to peer inside my medicine cabinet?

More than 90 percent of American women use some form of birth control during their child-bearing years. The most popular birth control method is oral contraceptives; of the 625,000 Wisconsin women relying on contraception, 85 percent use "the pill."

Judging from the Legislature's actions, this basic health care practice threatens the foundation of our society and requires immediate government action. Are these guys serious?

Imagine a pharmacist ripping up your prescription and questioning your moral fiber in front of six other shoppers.

While I might relish the opportunity to give the pharmacist a piece of my mind, most women - or men, for that matter - would not want to be put in that situation. What would you do?

Where does moral policing end?

A signed permission slip from your legislator to use a condom? Consent from the convenience store clerk to use their bathroom vending machine? A blessing from Richard Simmons to graze Old Country Buffet?

The Legislature is treating women as second-class citizens, playing father figure and asserting that their morals are superior when they arguably aren't living up to their own standard. (After all, as many conservative legislators have only two children, it follows that someone is using birth control in their household.)

We deserve the right to access basic health care and make educated, medically sound decisions about our own health

Tia recommends getting involved with Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin (www.ppw.org) and Women's Choice, a political action committee working to elect women who are abortion-rights advocates.

- [Blog: Sonya Jongsma Knauss](#)
- [Blog: Bob Purvis](#)

Pharmacists are guaranteed the right to exercise their religious beliefs

Rebecca Grassl Bradley

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution provides that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof . . . "

Despite this rather unambiguous language, the pro-abortion movement and its supporters, including certain pharmacies and Wisconsin's Pharmacy Examining Board, are attempting to prohibit morally guided pharmacists from freely exercising their religious beliefs.

Pharmacists have been fired and disciplined for exercising the belief, which can be scientifically supported, that contraceptives may cause the death of a conceived, unborn child by preventing implantation of a fertilized egg in the uterus.

A bill has been introduced in Wisconsin to protect pharmacists from employment discrimination and disciplinary action based upon their refusal to dispense drugs that would be used to cause an abortion. Proponents of "choice" oppose such conscience clauses because they interfere with the elevation of women's convenience over pharmacists' objections to being a party to murder.

Wisconsin's proposed conscience clause has also been criticized because it does not require pharmacists to refer patients to other pharmacies, a requirement rejected by the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy.

We entrust women - even minors - with the decisions to conceive, take contraceptives and abort their unborn children. It is certainly reasonable to expect women to plan for obtaining contraceptives from another pharmacy, the nearest Planned Parenthood or an emergency room.

Notably, patients do not have the right to demand abortions, sterilizations or euthanasia from Roman Catholic or other morally guided hospitals or providers.

The law protects women who choose to terminate pregnancy by chemical means.

The law protects doctors who choose to facilitate the termination of life by chemical means.

The law certainly should protect pharmacists who choose not to be a party to the morally abhorrent termination of life.

Hypocritically, "pro-choice" advocates are rather anti-choice on this issue.

Rebecca recommends visiting www.prolifewisconsin.org and Pharmacists For Life International, www.pfli.org, for more info about getting involved.

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