

March 1, 2023

The Honorable Mark Gordon  
Office of the Governor  
State Capitol  
200 West 24th Street  
Cheyenne, WY 82002  
Dear Governor Gordon:

I write today on behalf of the ACLU of Wyoming to express our strong opposition to House Bill 152 and Senate File 109, legislation that is deeply harmful to medical care for pregnant people in our state. If enacted, HB 152 and SF 109 will likely entrench Wyoming in a drawn out, costly legal battle.

We urge you to veto HB 152 and SF 109 for the following reasons:

**1. Abortion is essential health care.**

The ability to access abortion is critical to a person's health, well-being, and dignity. When it comes to the most personal decisions in life such as whether to have a child, it should be up to the individual to decide for themselves, free from punishment, judgment, or political interference. Patients should be able to get care in the way that's best for them and doctors should be able to treat their patients according to their best medical judgement. Once someone has made the decision to have an abortion, they should be able to get the care they need without shame, stigma, or unnecessary obstacles. Access to abortion should not depend on where you live or how much money you make.

Additionally, abortion restrictions disproportionately hurt Wyomingites who already have the hardest time accessing quality health care — people with low-income, Black, Latino and Indigenous communities, people in rural communities, and patients suffering from intimate partner violence. Forcing people to carry a pregnancy against their will has life-altering consequences, including enduring serious health risks from continued pregnancy and childbirth, making it harder to escape poverty, derailing their education and career plans, and making it more difficult to leave an abusive partner.

**2. HB 152 is far-reaching and harmful**

This bill allows revocation of a medical professional's license and fines forcing medical professionals to make decisions based on the opinions of Wyoming lawmakers rather than their own medical expertise. We understand there is an exception to this but what we have heard over and over again is that regardless of exceptions these laws change how medical professionals practice medicine and will in turn cause harm to Wyomingites.

This bill codifies certain legislators' beliefs that life begins at fertilization, and would insert certain legislators' constitutional interpretations into the Wyoming Statutes. The judicial branch of government is charged with interpreting the Constitution, and the Constitution does not delegate this authority to the legislature.



P.O. Box 20706  
Cheyenne, WY 82003  
[aclu-wy.org](http://aclu-wy.org)

Our concern is this is an extreme bill that would outlaw nearly every abortion in Wyoming. This bill would harm the women and families of Wyoming real people with unique circumstances who would be deprived of their ability to make the decision they think is best for them.

An additional concern is this bill reflects a particular religious viewpoint that life begins at conception/fertilization. However, many denominations respect a person's right to choose an abortion, and people of all religions have abortions. The free exercise of religion is guaranteed under the Wyoming Constitution (Article 1, Section 18).

### **3. SF 109 will cause harm to pregnant people**

Outlawing abortion medications would take away a safe, nonsurgical option for early pregnancy termination that has been used for more than 20 years and is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Medication abortion is preferred by some patients because it allows patients to have more control over their abortion and more privacy, and for some people it is not only preferred, but medically indicated. The most common method of medication abortion is a combination regimen of two oral medications: mifepristone and misoprostol. Since mifepristone was first approved by the FDA in 2000, more than 4 million patients in the United States have relied on the mifepristone-misoprostol regimen to safely end their pregnancies.

Additionally, medical management of miscarriage is often treated with mifepristone. High-quality medical research also has confirmed its important role in helping to treat miscarriage from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists has confirmed its important role in helping to treat miscarriage.<sup>1</sup> With this legislation, pharmacists and doctors may be reluctant to provide the needed drugs to people for miscarriage management under fear of being accused of providing abortion care.

### **4. Politicians should not be interfering in medical care**

Medical care should be guided by a patient's health and well-being, not politics. Politicians shouldn't tell doctors how to practice medicine or force them to act against their best medical judgment. This ban would take away a safe, non-invasive option for early abortion care. This ban also threatens doctors for using their best medical judgment to care for their patients.

In conclusion, extreme policies such as HB 152 and SF 109 are not consistent with the way we in Wyoming are supposed to respect people's choices and life decisions especially when it comes to the health care decisions of Wyomingites.

For these reasons, we strongly urge you to veto HB 152 and SF 109.


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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.acog.org/clinical-information/policy-and-position-statements/position-statements/2018/improving-access-to-mifepristone-for-reproductive-health-indications>



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[aclu-wy.org](http://aclu-wy.org)

Sincerely,



Antonio Serrano  
Advocacy Director  
ACLU of Wyoming  
aserrano@aclu.org



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aclu-wy.org