



BUCKS COUNTY
WOMEN'S
ADVOCACY COALITION

March 14, 2017

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

A Woman's Place
AAUW Doylestown Branch
AAUW Levittown-Lower Bucks Branch
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Bucks County
Bucks County Area Agency on Aging
Bucks County Commissioners' Advisory Council for Women
Bucks County Drug and Alcohol Commission, Inc.
Bucks County Housing Group
Bucks County Intermediate Unit #22
Bucks County Opportunity Council
Bucks County Workforce Development Board, Inc.
BuxMont Unitarian Universalist Peace and Justice Committee
Child, Home & Community
Delaware Valley Association for the Education of Young Children
Family Service Association of Bucks County
Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania
Interfaith Community of Lower Bucks
Keystone Progress
LaVO Design
League of Women Voters of Bucks County
Libertae
Makefield Area Action Fund of AAUW
Maternity Care Coalition
NAACP, Bucks County Branch
National Council of Jewish Women – PA
Network of Victim Assistance
PathWays PA
Planned Parenthood Keystone
Public Citizens for Children and Youth
Quality Child Care Coalition of Bucks County
Sircely Marketing & Design
Soroptimist International of Bucks County
The Council of Southeast Pennsylvania
The Peace Center
Women's Center of Montgomery County
YWCA Bucks County

PARTNER INDIVIDUALS

More Than 180 Individual Partners and Growing

Dear Representatives DiGirolamo, O'Neill, Warren, Galloway, Davis, Farry, Quinn, Watson, Staats, and Petri:

The mission of Bucks County Women's Advocacy Coalition and its 36 partner organizations is to advocate on behalf of women to promote systemic change to achieve gender equity and economic security for all. Access to the full range of modern health care and safe procedures is critical for women and their families to make choices that are right for them and them alone. We respect the personal health decisions, intelligence and dignity of all women and call on our legislators to do the same. We do not pretend to be trained physicians when we are not, nor be judgmental about the legal personal health choice that many women face.

We are dismayed that the PA state legislature, both the house and the senate, is taking a giant step backward in the progress that women have made in our state and in our nation. **Both SB 3 and HB 77** institute an unconstitutional 20-week abortion ban. This ban punishes women who discover lethal or life threatening abnormalities after the 20-week ultrasound and criminalizes doctors for performing procedures that women and their doctors decide are best for their family, their personal health, and their future reproductive capabilities. Both bills also criminalize the procedure that the medical community states is the safest for the health of the woman.

According to Pew Research Center, only 37% of adults think abortion should be illegal all or most of the time. We all know that both of these bills, passed without public hearings and medical testimony, do not have the backing of physicians and the vast majority of adults. We want to trust that our Bucks County legislators will not play politics when the outcome would increase the suffering and endanger the health of women at the most vulnerable and painful moments of their lives.

To reiterate our many calls and letters: Neither SB 3 nor HB 77 provides exception for rape or incest; both force women to carry unviable fetuses after 19 weeks gestation to term and condemn many to still births. The time frame ignores the fact that only 1.2% of abortions in PA occur after the 20th week of pregnancy. A woman who has carried a fetus for 20 weeks does not make such a decision lightly; abortions after 20 weeks are most always the result of severe and lethal abnormalities discovered at the 20-week ultrasound when termination would be criminalized. Both bills ignore the medical community that overwhelmingly concludes that a D & E is the safest procedure for the woman's health and future reproductive ability. Both bills are unconstitutional. Contrary to statements made at the judiciary hearing, viability is currently considered to be 24 weeks after the last menstrual period, and there is no evidence that a fetus feels pain at 20 weeks...all easily fact checked in medical literature.

There are many issues before both houses that would improve the quality of life for many women, children, and families in Bucks County and the commonwealth. Targeting a small group of vulnerable and devastated women and families who are trying to cope with one of the worst situations of their lives is NOT PRO-LIFE. These are cruel and heartless bills. We are acutely aware of this personal anguish as a daughter of a BCWAC Partner recently went through this experience after her 20-week ultra-sound. She and others deserve safe options and emotional support.

Respectfully,

Tam St. Claire, President