

Qualified Support for SB21-193  
Concerning Protections for Pregnant People during the Perinatal Period

The authors of SB21-193 should be lauded for this attempt to improve perinatal care for Colorado women, particularly those who are most likely to endure undignified and substandard care like women who are incarcerated. However, there is one component of the bill which is terribly misguided. That is the portion of the bill that would repeal common sense restrictions on implementation of a woman's advance directives while pregnant with a viable human fetus.

In the event that a woman suffers a life compromising physical complication as a result of her pregnancy or an unrelated injury from antecedent disease or trauma, her doctors would normally deliver the baby before withdrawing life sustaining procedures and/or artificial nutrition and hydration as directed in her living will. There is no reason to compound the impending tragedy of the woman's death with the added tragedy of the **wanted** baby's death. SB21-193 would preclude the physicians/nurses caring for the woman from delivering the baby prior to following the advance directive to withdraw life-sustaining care. This is incredibly inhumane and cruel. It would be traumatizing to the medical team. It does not reflect Colorado values.

Advance directives are very crude instruments. They were never meant to anticipate all circumstances at the end of life. Advance directives are routinely suspended during surgical procedures. They certainly were not drafted with a late pregnancy in mind. By passing SB21-193 in its present form, the Colorado legislature will be countermanding the will of these woman under truly tragic circumstances. These women have **wanted** pregnancies and beloved babies.

I am well aware that only 10% of 18–24-year-old women in Colorado even have advanced directives. And, fortunately, a miniscule number of them will ever suffer a catastrophic complication late in pregnancy. However, because the problem is extremely rare does not absolve the Colorado legislature from standing up for the inherent dignity and value of human life. Don't tie the hands of the medical professionals who are caring for these women.

Please amend SB21-193 and remove the language pertaining to advance directives.

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