



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ALABAMA STATE HOUSE

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130

DISTRICT NO. 29
DeKalb and Etowah County

COMMITTEES:
STATE GOVERNMENT
HEALTH
CHILDREN AND SENIOR ADVOCACY

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HOUSE APPROVES HEALTH CARE RIGHTS OF CONSCIENCE ACT ***NORDGREN BILL PROTECTS MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS FROM VIOLATING MORAL COMPASS***

Montgomery – The Alabama House on Tuesday gave its approval to the Health Care Rights of Conscience Act, a bill sponsored by State Rep. Becky Nordgren (R – Gadsden) and designed to ensure that medical professionals are not forced to participate in procedures that violate their moral compass.

The bill, which passed by a vote of 71 to 24, is included in the House Republican Caucus' *Commonsense Conservative* legislative agenda that was announced prior to the start of the session.

“Many doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals are just as opposed to issues like stem cell research and abortion as the rest of us, and their deep beliefs and strong feelings must be taken into account,” Nordgren said. “Forcing them to participate in medical procedures that violate their conscience and moral viewpoint is an injustice, and this bill will ensure that their rights are securely protected.”

She noted that the situation could soon become even more severe in Alabama if Obamacare and its stifling mandates on medical professionals and patients go fully into effect.

Nordgren pointed out that 46 states currently allow health care providers to refuse to perform abortions, 13 states allow refusal of contraception services, and 18 states allow refusal of sterilizations. Alabama, however, is one of only three states that do not afford health care providers with similar options of any kind.

Under the provisions of Nordgren's measure, Alabama health care providers would have the rights to refuse to participate in a specific service that violates their conscience if their objections are submitted in writing and placed on file prior to being asked. Services that can be declined to perform include those related to abortion, human cloning, human embryonic stem cell research, and sterilization.

The bill also provides civil, criminal and administrative liability protections to those who decline to perform procedures and have complied with the law's other requirements. Neither institutions nor individuals may discriminate against medical providers who opt out of procedures under the law. Those who feel they face adverse employment action as a result of utilizing the law may bring legal action for reinstatement of job position, back pay, and litigation costs.

The bill now goes to the Senate for its consideration.