



Testimony on the Child Interstate Abortion Notification Act (CIANA)

By Michael J. New, Ph.D.

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I appreciate this opportunity to offer testimony on behalf of the Child Interstate Abortion Notification Act. I am currently an Assistant Professor of Political Science at The University of Michigan – Dearborn. I am also an Adjunct Scholar at the Charlotte Lozier Institute, the Research and Education arm of the Susan B. Anthony List here in Washington, D.C. I have a Ph.D. in Political Science and a Masters Degree in Statistics both from Stanford University. I have authored 9 articles which have appeared in various peer-reviewed journals, 3 of which have been on the topic of the impact of state level pro-life legislation. In March of 2011, an article of mine on this topic was published in *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* which is the top state politics journal in the country.

I have evaluated the research on parental involvement laws that has appeared in peer-reviewed public health journals, economics journals, and political science journals. I have come across 18 peer-reviewed studies on this subject. The peer-reviewed research on the impact of state level parental involvement laws arrives at a great deal of consensus about their effects. I want to highlight the 4 most important findings in my testimony this morning.

- 1) First, every peer-reviewed study I have seen, 16 in total, finds that state-level parental involvement laws reduce the in-state abortion rate for minors. This is true of studies that analyze time series-cross sectional data which allow for the simultaneous analysis of multiple state-level parental involvement laws (Haas Wilson 1993, 1996; Levine 2003; Medoff 2007; New 2007, 2009, 2011; Ohsfeldt and Gohman 1994; Tomal 1999). It is also true of studies that focus on the impact of individual state-level parental involvement laws. There have been separate studies analyzing the laws in 6 states including Indiana (Ellertson 1997), Massachusetts (Cartoof and Klerman 1996), Minnesota (Ellertson 1997; Rogers et al. 1991), Mississippi (Henshaw 1995), Missouri (Ellertson 1997; Pierson 1995), and Texas (Colman, Joyce, and Kaestner 2008; Joyce Kaestner and Colman 2006).

The findings are very similar. After the passage of a parental involvement law, the research shows that there is a statistically significant reduction in the in-state minor abortion rate from anywhere from 13 percent (Henshaw 1995) to 42 percent (Cartoof and Klerman 1986). Most studies found a decline in the in-state minor abortion rate ranging from 15 to 20 percent (Colman, Joyce, and Kaestner 2008; Ellertson 1997; Haas-Wilson 1996; Joyce, Kaestner, and Colman 2006; Levine 2003; New 2011; Ohsfeldt and Gohman 1994; Tomal 1999). Additionally, in my own research, I have found some evidence that laws requiring the involvement of both parents, such as the laws in Minnesota and Mississippi, result in even larger declines in the in-state abortion rate (New 2008).

- 2) Second, state-level parental involvement laws are worth enacting because the in state abortion decline consistently exceeds any out-of-state increase. The two best studies of state-level parental involvement laws both show this. The first is "Parental Consent for Abortion: Impact of

the Massachusetts Law.” This study appeared in the *American Journal for Public Health* in 1986 and analyzed the Massachusetts parental involvement law which took effect in 1981 (Cartoof and Klerman 1986). The second is “Changes in Abortions and Births and the Texas Parental Involvement Law.” This study appeared in *The New England Journal of Medicine* in 2006 and analyzed the Texas parental involvement law which took effect in 2000 (Joyce, Kaestner, and Colman 2006). Both studies were unique because they were able to analyze monthly data on in-state minor abortions, out-of-state minor abortions, and births to minors.

Both studies found that after the enactment of both the Massachusetts law and the Texas law, the in-state abortion decline clearly exceeded the out-of-state increase. Furthermore, both studies found evidence of short-term increases in the minor birth rate. The Texas study found statistically significant increases in the birth rate of minors who were over 17 and one half years old when they conceived (Joyce, Kaestner, and Colman 2006). Another Texas study which analyzed similar data found that the birth rate for 17 year olds increased by 2 percent after the parental involvement law took effect (Colman, Joyce, and Kaestner 2008). The Massachusetts study suggests that in the year after the parental involvement law took effect, anywhere from 50 to 100 minors gave birth -- instead of having abortions -- as a result of the law (Cartoof and Klerman 1986).

- 3) Third, every study that tracks out-of-state abortions finds that after a parental involvement law goes into effect, the number of girls obtaining abortions in adjacent states without parental involvement laws will increase by a statistically significant margin (Cartoof and Klerman 1986; Ellertson 1997). Now, in geographically large states like Texas relatively few minor girls obtained abortions in neighboring states (Joyce, Kaestner, and Colman 1996). However, in a geographically small state like Massachusetts a substantial percentage of the decline in the minor abortion rate is due to minor girls obtaining abortions in adjacent states where the laws are more permissive (Cartoof and Klerman 1986). A study of the parental involvement law that took effect in Missouri in 1985 had similar findings. Much of the decline in the minor abortion rate was due to increases in the number of minor girls obtaining abortions in adjacent states without parental involvement laws (Ellertson 1997).
- 4) Fourth and finally, the knowledge that their parents will be involved with an abortion decision provides teen girls with a strong disincentive to engage in unprotected sexual activity. Indeed, there is a body of research on the positive public health effects associated with the presence of parental involvement laws. A 2003 study in the *Journal of Health Economics* (Levine 2003) found that parental involvement laws reduce the pregnancy rate of 15 to 17 year olds by 4 to 9 percent. A 2008 study in the *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* shows that parental involvement laws reduce the gonorrhea rate anywhere from 12 to 20 percent for females under 20 (Klick and Stratmann 2008). Finally, this past February the journal *Economic Inquiry* published a study which shows that the enactment of parental involvement law is associated with an 11 to 21 percent reduction in the number of 15 to 17 year old females who commit suicide (Sabia and Rees 2012).

As such, I would encourage members of the committee to support the Child Interstate Abortion Notification Act. This piece of legislation would give parents more involvement in how their minor daughters resolve their pregnancies. It is safe to say that parents have more invested in the well-being of their minor daughters than a boyfriend, a friend, or a relative. They also would likely have the best knowledge of their daughter’s medical history. There have been reported

instances where minor girls obtained abortions without their parents' knowledge and died because they did not realize they were allergic to the anesthesia. Based on the testimony I have given, I am confident the Child Interstate Abortion Notification Act would lead to both fewer abortions and better public health outcomes for teen girls. Thank you.

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