Senate Bill 648

Sponsored by Senator THATCHER

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure as introduced.

Prohibits abortion unless physician has first determined probable post-fertilization age of unborn child, except in case of medical emergency.

Prohibits abortion of unborn child with probable post-fertilization age of 20 or more weeks, except in case of medical emergency.

Requires physician who performs or induces, or attempts to perform or induce, abortion to file report, within 30 days, with Oregon Health Authority.

Requires authority to publish annually statistics relating to abortion.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

Relating to abortion; creating new provisions; and amending ORS 677.190.

Whereas pain receptors are present throughout the unborn child’s entire body by 16 weeks after fertilization and nerves link these receptors to the brain’s thalamus and subcortical plate by 20 weeks after fertilization; and

Whereas by eight weeks after fertilization, the unborn child reacts to stimuli that would be recognized as painful if applied to an adult human, for example by recoiling; and

Whereas in the unborn child, application of such painful stimuli is associated with significant increases in stress hormones known as the stress response; and

Whereas subjection to such painful stimuli is associated with long-term harmful neurodevelopmental effects, such as altered pain sensitivity and, possibly, emotional, behavioral and learning disabilities later in life; and

Whereas for the purposes of surgery on unborn children, fetal anesthesia is routinely administered and is associated with a decrease in stress hormones compared to their level when painful stimuli are applied without anesthesia; and

Whereas the position, asserted by some medical experts, that the unborn child is incapable of experiencing pain until a point later in pregnancy than 20 weeks after fertilization predominantly rests on the assumption that the ability to experience pain depends on the cerebral cortex and requires nerve connections between the thalamus and the cortex; and

Whereas recent medical research and analysis conducted since 2007 provides strong evidence for the conclusion that a functioning cortex is not necessary to experience pain; and

Whereas substantial evidence indicates that children born missing the bulk of the cerebral cortex, such as those with hydranencephaly, nevertheless experience pain; and

Whereas in adults, stimulation or ablation of the cerebral cortex does not alter pain perception, while stimulation or ablation of the thalamus does; and

Whereas substantial evidence indicates that structures used for pain processing in early development differ from those of adults, using different neural elements available at specific times during development, such as the subcortical plate, to fulfill the role of pain processing; and

NOTE: Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter [*italic and bracketed*] is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

LC 1744
Whereas there is substantial medical evidence that an unborn child is capable of experiencing pain by 20 weeks after fertilization; and

Whereas it is the purpose of the Legislative Assembly to assert a compelling state interest in protecting the lives of unborn children from the stage at which substantial medical evidence indicates that they are capable of feeling pain; now, therefore,

Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:

SECTION 1. As used in sections 1 to 5 of this 2019 Act:

(1) “Abortion” means the use or prescription of any instrument, medicine, drug or any other substance or device to terminate the pregnancy of a woman known to be pregnant, if the intention is other than to increase the probability of a live birth, to preserve the life or health of the child after live birth or to remove a dead unborn child who died as the result of natural causes in utero, accidental trauma or a criminal assault on the pregnant woman or her unborn child, and that use or prescription causes the premature termination of the pregnancy.

(2) “Attempt to perform or induce an abortion” means an act, or an omission of a statutorily required act, that, under the circumstances as the actor believes them to be, constitutes a substantial step in a course of conduct planned to culminate in the performance or induction of an abortion.

(3) “Fertilization” means the fusion of a human spermatozoon with a human ovum.

(4)(a) “Medical emergency” means a condition that, in reasonable medical judgment, so complicates the medical condition of the pregnant woman as to necessitate the immediate termination of her pregnancy to avert her death or for which a delay necessary to determine probable post-fertilization age will create serious risk of substantial and irreversible physical impairment of a major bodily function, not including psychological or emotional functions.

(b) “Medical emergency” does not include the likelihood that the pregnant woman will engage in conduct that would result in her death or in substantial and irreversible physical impairment of a major bodily function.

(5) “Physician” means a doctor licensed to practice under ORS chapter 677.

(6) “Post-fertilization age” means the age of the unborn child as calculated from the fertilization of the human ovum.

(7) “Probable post-fertilization age” means what, in reasonable medical judgment, will with reasonable probability be the post-fertilization age of the unborn child at the time an abortion is planned to be performed.

(8) “Reasonable medical judgment” means a medical judgment that would be made by a reasonably prudent physician who is knowledgeable about the case and the treatment possibilities with respect to the medical conditions involved.

(9) “Unborn child” means an individual organism of the species Homo sapiens from fertilization until live birth.

(10) “Woman” means a female human being, whether or not she has reached the age of maturity.

SECTION 2. (1) Except in the case of a medical emergency that prevents compliance with this section, a person may not perform or induce, or attempt to perform or induce, an abortion unless a physician has first made a determination of the probable post-fertilization age of the unborn child.

(2) In making the determination required by subsection (1) of this section, the physician
shall make the inquiries of the woman and perform or cause to be performed the medical
examinations and tests that a reasonably prudent physician who is knowledgeable about the
case and the medical conditions involved would make and perform to make an accurate di-
agnosis with respect to post-fertilization age.

SECTION 3. (1) Except in the event of a medical emergency, a person may not perform
or induce, or attempt to perform or induce, an abortion when a physician has determined
that the probable post-fertilization age of the unborn child is 20 or more weeks.

(2) When a physician terminates a pregnancy that is not prohibited under this section
because of a medical emergency, the physician shall terminate the pregnancy in the manner
that, in reasonable medical judgment, provides the best opportunity for the unborn child to
survive, unless, in reasonable medical judgment, termination of the pregnancy in that man-
ner would pose a greater risk of the death of the pregnant woman or of the substantial and
irreversible physical impairment of a major bodily function of the woman, other than psy-
chological or emotional functions, than other available methods. The likelihood that the
woman will engage in conduct that would result in her death or in substantial and irrevers-
ible physical impairment of a major bodily function does not constitute a greater risk under
this subsection.

SECTION 4. Within 30 days after a physician performs or induces, or attempts to per-
form or induce, an abortion, the physician shall report to the Oregon Health Authority in
accordance with rules adopted by the authority. The report must include:

(1) If a determination of probable post-fertilization age was made, the probable post-
fertilization age determined and the method and basis of the determination;

(2) If a determination of probable post-fertilization age was not made or the probable
post-fertilization age was determined to be 20 or more weeks, the basis of the determination
that a medical emergency existed; and

(3) The method used for the abortion and, in the case of a termination performed when
the probable post-fertilization age was determined to be 20 or more weeks:

(a) Whether the method used was one that, in reasonable medical judgment, provided the
best opportunity for the unborn child to survive; or

(b) If the method used did not provide the best opportunity for the unborn child to sur-
vive, the basis of the determination that termination of the pregnancy in that manner would
pose a greater risk of the death of the pregnant woman or of the substantial and irreversible
physical impairment of a major bodily function of the woman, other than psychological or
emotional functions, than other available methods.

SECTION 5. (1) On or before June 30 of each year, the Oregon Health Authority shall
issue a public report of statistics relating to abortion. The public report must include:

(a) Statistics for the previous calendar year compiled from the reports submitted under
section 4 of this 2019 Act.

(b) Statistics for all previous calendar years in which reports were submitted under sec-
tion 4 of this 2019 Act, adjusted to reflect any additional information from late or corrected
reports.

(2) The authority may not include individually identifiable information in the public re-
port.

SECTION 6. ORS 677.190 is amended to read:

677.190. The Oregon Medical Board may refuse to grant, or may suspend or revoke a license to
practice for any of the following reasons:

1. (a) Unprofessional or dishonorable conduct.
   (b) For purposes of this subsection, the use of an alternative medical treatment shall not by it-
   self constitute unprofessional conduct. For purposes of this paragraph:
   (A) “Alternative medical treatment” means:
   (i) A treatment that the treating physician, based on the physician’s professional experience, has
   an objective basis to believe has a reasonable probability for effectiveness in its intended use even
   if the treatment is outside recognized scientific guidelines, is unproven, is no longer used as a gen-
   erally recognized or standard treatment or lacks the approval of the United States Food and Drug
   Administration;
   (ii) A treatment that is supported for specific usages or outcomes by at least one other physician
   licensed by the Oregon Medical Board; and
   (iii) A treatment that poses no greater risk to a patient than the generally recognized or
       standard treatment.
   (B) “Alternative medical treatment” does not include use by a physician of controlled substances
   in the treatment of a person for chemical dependency resulting from the use of controlled sub-
   stances.

2. Employing any person to solicit patients for the licensee. However, a managed care organ-
   ization, independent practice association, preferred provider organization or other medical service
   provider organization may contract for patients on behalf of physicians.

3. Representing to a patient that a manifestly incurable condition of sickness, disease or injury
   can be cured.

4. Obtaining any fee by fraud or misrepresentation.

5. Willfully or negligently divulging a professional secret without the written consent of the
   patient.

6. Conviction of any offense punishable by incarceration in a Department of Corrections insti-
   tution or in a federal prison, subject to ORS 670.280. A copy of the record of conviction, certified
   to by the clerk of the court entering the conviction, shall be conclusive evidence of the conviction.

7. Impairment as defined in ORS 676.303.

8. Fraud or misrepresentation in applying for or procuring a license to practice in this state,
   or in connection with applying for or procuring registration.

9. Making statements that the licensee knows, or with the exercise of reasonable care should
   know, are false or misleading, regarding skill or the efficacy or value of the medicine, treatment or
   remedy prescribed or administered by the licensee or at the direction of the licensee in the treat-
   ment of any disease or other condition of the human body or mind.

10. Impersonating another licensee licensed under this chapter or permitting or allowing any
    person to use the license.

11. Aiding or abetting the practice of medicine or podiatry by a person not licensed by the
    board, when the licensee knows, or with the exercise of reasonable care should know, that the per-
    son is not licensed.

12. Using the name of the licensee under the designation “doctor,” “Dr.,” “D.O.,” or “M.D.,”
    “D.P.M.,” “Acupuncturist,” “P.A.” or any similar designation in any form of advertising that is
    untruthful or is intended to deceive or mislead the public.

13. Gross negligence or repeated negligence in the practice of medicine or podiatry.

14. Incapacity to practice medicine or podiatry. If the board has evidence indicating incapacity,
the board may order a licensee to submit to a standardized competency examination. The licensee shall have access to the result of the examination and to the criteria used for grading and evaluating the examination. If the examination is given orally, the licensee shall have the right to have the examination recorded.

(15) Disciplinary action by another state of a license to practice, based upon acts by the licensee similar to acts described in this section. A certified copy of the record of the disciplinary action of the state is conclusive evidence thereof.

(16) Failing to designate the degree appearing on the license under circumstances described in ORS 677.184 (3).

(17) Willfully violating any provision of this chapter or any rule adopted by the board, board order, or failing to comply with a board request pursuant to ORS 677.320.

(18) Failing to report the change of the location of practice of the licensee as required by ORS 677.172.

(19) Imprisonment as provided in ORS 677.225.

(20) Making a fraudulent claim.

(21)(a) Performing psychosurgery.

(b) For purposes of this subsection and ORS 426.385, “psychosurgery” means any operation designed to produce an irreversible lesion or destroy brain tissue for the primary purpose of altering the thoughts, emotions or behavior of a human being. “Psychosurgery” does not include procedures which may produce an irreversible lesion or destroy brain tissues when undertaken to cure well-defined disease states such as brain tumor, epileptic foci and certain chronic pain syndromes.

(22) Refusing an invitation for an informal interview with the board requested under ORS 677.415.

(23) Violation of the federal Controlled Substances Act.

(24) Prescribing controlled substances without a legitimate medical purpose, or prescribing controlled substances without following accepted procedures for examination of patients, or prescribing controlled substances without following accepted procedures for record keeping.

(25) Providing written documentation for purposes of ORS 475B.797 without having legitimately diagnosed a debilitating medical condition, as defined in ORS 475B.791, or without having followed accepted procedures for the examination of patients or for keeping records.

(26) Failure by the licensee to report to the board any adverse action taken against the licensee by another licensing jurisdiction or any peer review body, health care institution, professional or medical society or association, governmental agency, law enforcement agency or court for acts or conduct similar to acts or conduct that would constitute grounds for disciplinary action as described in this section.

(27) Failure by the licensee to notify the board of the licensee’s voluntary resignation from the staff of a health care institution or voluntary limitation of a licensee’s staff privileges at the institution if that action occurs while the licensee is under investigation by the institution or a committee thereof for any reason related to medical incompetence, unprofessional conduct, physical incapacity or impairment.

(28) Violation of section 2 or 3 of this 2019 Act.

SECTION 7. Sections 1 to 5 of this 2019 Act and the amendments to ORS 677.190 by section 6 of this 2019 Act apply to abortions that are performed or induced, or attempted to be performed or induced, on or after the effective date of this 2019 Act.