

Submitter: Anika Denali Luengo
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1570

Hello,

As an OB/GYN Hospitalist in Portland, OR I strongly support SB 1570.

I care for patients at one of the most vulnerable times of their life, during childbirth. At my hospital I care for a large volume of immigrant patients, many of whom have high risk pregnancies or are experiencing dangerous complications of pregnancy.

Some of our high risk antepartum patients have had ICE appointments during their prolonged antepartum admissions and were told they would be arrested if they did not show up. I have written letters to ICE on their behalf to excuse them during their hospitalization. The stress this places on a patient already experiencing the stress of an admission for obstetrical complications is unfathomable to me.

Some of our patients present for delivery alone, because their partners have already been taken in by ICE or deported. Some show up alone because their family is scared of the risk of exposure to ICE officers at the hospital. No one should give birth alone.

This week I cared for an immigrant patient who desperately needed a cesarean for the safety of herself and her baby but was terrified to proceed because she assumed a forced sterilization would be performed on her. Trust between healthcare workers and immigrant patients is eroding which leads to worse outcomes for patients and their babies.

Fear of seeking maternal health care will lead to increased maternal and neonatal mortality and morbidity. We need our hospitals to remain sanctuaries for our patients. We need to have the ability to build trust and provide just and equitable care to all of our patients.

Ensuring that vulnerable Oregonians feel safe accessing necessary medical care regardless of their immigration status is of urgent importance. I urge you to vote YES on SB 1570.

Sincerely,
Anika Denali Luengo,MD