

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE:
526 CORDELL HULL BLDG.
425 Rep. John Lewis Way N.
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243



CONTACT:
rep.chris.todd@capitol.tn.gov
(615) 741-7475 (OFFICE)
(615) 253-0373 (FAX)

**House of Representatives
State of Tennessee
REPRESENTATIVE CHRIS TODD**
Chairman, Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
Member, Agriculture and Natural Resources Subcommittee
Member, Transportation Committee
Member, Civil Justice Subcommittee
Member, Judiciary Committee
Member, Calendar & Rules

April 16, 2025

The Honorable Bill Lee, Governor
State of Tennessee
First Floor, Tennessee Capitol Building
600 Martin Luther King Boulevard
Nashville, Tennessee 37243

Dear Governor Lee:

As you are aware, the "Fertility Treatment and Contraceptive Protection Act" (HB533 by Rudder) passed in the House yesterday. It passed in the Senate on April 10, and will soon be heading to your desk. We, the undersigned members of the Tennessee House of Representatives, being fully aware of the significance of our request, hereby implore you to veto this bill.

The bill was presented as a means to ensure continued access to methods of contraception, including emergency contraception, which is the so-called Morning After or Plan B pill (the pill), and as a means of protecting infertile couples' access to In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) procedures. However, the bill sponsor readily admitted that there is no current necessity for the "right" purportedly secured by this bill, as there is no law or rule in effect in Tennessee limiting or denying access to the products or services described therein. As I noted on the House Floor: 'This bill is a solution looking for a problem.'

At face value and with due deference to the sponsor's honorable intent, signing this bill into law would appear to be an act of compassion, particularly for those couples who are facing childlessness. We would further agree that there is no question that the children who were born as a result of IVF are blessings from God. However, the support of this bill by the ACLU, Planned Parenthood, and all 24 House Democrats should give you pause to consider whether it, well-intended or not, is a Trojan horse that could potentially undermine Tennessee's strong and righteous stance on the protection of innocent human life.



The inclusion of the term “emergency contraceptives” in the bill could potentially open Pandora’s box as pro-choice activists seek to stretch the inch provided by this bill into the proverbial mile. Questions about the science, ethical use, and/or efficacy of so-called “morning after” drugs have long been debated. Some would have us believe that these drugs are not abortifacient, as they prevent the egg from being released from the ovary. However, we know that if the pill is not taken immediately following intercourse, ovulation may not be prevented, and conception may occur. In those cases, depending upon how long after intercourse the pill is taken, the introduction of Levonorgestrel or Ulipristal Acetate, types of progesterone in these pills, could prevent the implantation of a fertilized egg.

Therein lies the crux of the debate as it relates to these “emergency contraceptives.” That is, when does conception (human life) begin? Is it when the egg is fertilized or when that fertilized egg attaches to the uterine wall? How you answer this question will determine whether or not you believe that these over-the-counter products can be abortifacient, depending on the differing effects of the various products and the timing of when they are used.

Two issues with IVF were not discussed in the floor debate. The first is, what is done with the fertilized eggs that the couple does not use? That answer, simply, is they are destroyed. Once again, we must ask ourselves to define the term “conception” to determine when it occurs. We would submit that conception begins at the moment of fertilization, and thus, destroying these babies that are no longer needed or wanted is a type of abortion. It is an act of intentionally terminating human life that should not be provided legal cover.

The second question is related to the fetal reduction procedure that must sometimes be done. According to the Mayo Clinic, there are cases when IVF can result in too many pregnancies at once. This poses a health risk to the mothers and their babies. In these cases, a surgery is performed to remove some of the babies so that the risks to the mother and the remaining babies is lowered. In our view, this is selective abortion.

We believe that God granted Tennessee a reprieve through the Dobbs decision. When the Supreme Court returned authority in these matters to the states, the Justices, in essence, asked, “Choose this day whom you will serve...” As a state, we answered, “...we will serve the Lord.” If HB533 becomes law, we will no longer be able to stand in the same posture before our Righteous Lord.

We are convinced that a number of our colleagues would have voted differently had all aspects of these complex and confusing issues been thoroughly and openly discussed. The fact that legislators did not individually investigate the implications of this bill more fully is something that we all have to own. However, our Founders set up our system of government not only to protect against an abuse of power but to protect against human error. We, therefore, urge you to exercise your Constitutional authority to veto this legislation.



If we, as a government, authorize the slaughter of even one innocent life, God will judge us collectively. The power to save lies in your hands. May the living water now flow from your pen.
Sincerely and in reverence to Almighty God,

Sincerely,

Representative Chris Todd
District 73

Michel Reneau

Joseph M. Barnett

Timothy

Scott

Scott