

Results regarding HB 2050

Number 6 in Part II of the surveys reads as follows:

1. ***"Under current Pennsylvania law, a woman can obtain an abortion prior to 24 weeks gestational age for any reason, except if the woman's sole reason is to select the sex of the child. House Bill 2050 would expand that exception to prohibit aborting a child due solely to a prenatal diagnosis that the unborn child has Down syndrome. The legislation contains no restrictions on a mother obtaining an abortion in cases of rape, incest or personal endangerment."***

Down syndrome is a congenital, chromosome abnormality causing developmental delays and physical limitations impacting a child's height and facial appearance.

Those arguing in support of the bill note that advances in medicine have extended the life expectancy and quality of life of children with Down Syndrome.

Those arguing against this Bill note that it is still a matter of family choice as difficult and complex as this may be and that the law would take this choice away from the individual and place it within the jurisdiction of the state of Pennsylvania.

With regard to the proposed PA House Bill 2050, what would your recommendation to the state legislature be?

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly support	14	12.6
	Moderately support	11	9.9
	Neutral	15	13.5
	Moderately oppose	10	9.0
	Strongly oppose	45	40.5
	Don't know	11	9.9
	Total	106	95.5
Missing	-1	4	3.6
	System	1	.9
	Total	5	4.5
Total	111	100.0	



Please give your reasons for the selection that you made.

Selecting Oppose (56 comments/reasons)

The decision for abortion is between a woman and her doctor. Politicians should not restrict it. (T =Temple University sample)

I don't think that the state has any business regulating reproductive choice. (T)

The regulation would put unrealistic and financial hardships on the facilities [families?] (T)

It's hard to say what is right in a situation you have no experience in. (T)

Downs syndrome is not a death sentence or a determination of the child's quality of life. (T)

The state's interference diminishes medical privacy and creates a risk of the patients turning to unsafe alternatives. (T)

I don't personally believe in genetic selection but I don't support legislating those decisions on the basis of abortion. (T)

It is an individual's right to make a decision about their own situation. (T)
Again the women's right to choose is paramount especially because her and her partner (if available) will likely die before the child and then how is the child cared for?

Legislators are assigning a life sentence for some without due process.

Because it would be such a challenge to raise and care for a disabled child, there should be a medical path to a "solution" for those who feel they can't do it justice.

I agree with the argument above. Those arguing against this Bill note that it is still a matter of family choice as difficult and complex as this may be and that the law would take this choice away from the individual and place it within jurisdiction of legislators.

Those arguing in support of the bill note that advanced in medicine have extended the life expectancy and quality of life of children with Down Syndrome.

The state wants to keep your child but the state does not provide adequate financial and medical assistance to single family households let alone a parent who would have to care for a child with a medical condition.

Give me a break!

This is a choice that should be up to each family. It is privacy stuff.

I believe a woman should have the right to choose whether or not she wants to spend the rest of her life caring for an individual with a disability.

There are many reasons a family might have that would lead them to abort a Down's fetus. They are not all covered by recent advances in medicine. It should always ultimately be the family's or woman's choice.

Down Syndrome too serious a situation

Violates liberty

Again it is putting the hardship on the family. Are the law makers going to be in the home helping with time and money. I think not. Again shame on the lawmakers

Sounds Orwellian

Parents need to be able to decide the destiny of their offspring. Parents know what they can cope with emotionally and financially.

1. Ineffective, unenforceable policy cannot prove the above are sole reasons for a decision. 2. infringes on a woman's freedom to make her own decisions.

Abortion should be solely up to the women, not society. A women's right to abortion shall not be abridged. That is the only acceptable position.

Virtually all of the cosponsors on this bill opposed measures that would increase funds and supports to people and families with disabilities. They don't give a damn about taking care of people with disabilities. This was to create a wedge between abortion [proponents].

I'm a broken record with no nuances in my position on abortion. I think it should be an absolute right.

When getting an abortion because of sex of the child - some defects are carried by only one sex.

This is a family's choice. You cannot legislate how a family can cope in such a situation

This is simply another attempt to chip away at abortion access, not to protect the rights and interests of communities of people with disabilities. This exception would deny expectant parents agency. Resources would be better spent on improving services for [unknown]

Parents have the right to decide themselves whether they have the capacity and resources to raise a child with such extensive special needs.

It is the woman's choice as she will probably be the pregnancy caregiver

Again, women should have the exclusive right to make decision based on how the birth would affect the child and its' family

I don't believe in controlling women and their choices

A woman should be in complete [control] of her body

A woman should not have the undue burden to care for a child with down syndrome which is incredibly more difficult than a child without the condition, because of the pure chance that the fetus' genes developed that way.

That's ridiculous! It's a woman's body - her money, her future - her choice - PA law and NO law should have any say on a woman to abort a compromised fetus

I have a child with disabilities and we know a lot of kids with Down Syndrome and love them. I also know there is concern that services for people with Down syndrome will shrink and receive less financial support as their numbers drop. Even so, I believe [unknown]

It is a family or woman's decision

None of the gov't's business

That is a personal choice. There are many Downs' parents that have great kids. Not everyone can handle that choice.

I agree with the arguments against this bill. It is a matter of choice regardless of the reason.

The government should not infringe on the liberty of women and families. No one should be compelled to carry a fetus to term if doing so would impose a significant burden.

Leave all decisions to patients and medical professionals

The state should stay out of this. It's a woman's choice

It is an individual decision

Selecting Support (2 comments/reasons)

Down's syndrome children are wonderful

I know and love people with Down Syndrome. They deserve better

Neutral/Conflicted/Other

I am unaware of the day-to-day quality of life of people with Down syndrome

I am not completely clear where I stand on this issue. I think it is an incredibly hard decision that a family should be able to make for themselves, however many people born with these issues are able to live happy, mostly healthy lives.

This is a difficult question to answer

Transition from salient comments to salient points about the Bill.

This case type is a variation on cases dealing with congenital abnormalities. It is crucial to note that HB 2050 would “*prohibit aborting a child due solely to a prenatal diagnosis that the unborn child has Down syndrome.*”

But terminating a pregnancy due to a diagnosis of Down Syndrome is *both a difficult and complex* decision for those who decide to do so.

Participants noted that the criterion of “solely” does not contain all of the other types of reasons individuals and families will consider in coming to their decision. It will involve consideration of emotional and financial resources, maturity, family size and dependency and whether the individual is in a failing relationship...In other words, most of the case types listed in previous survey questions. People don't say “I have a prejudice against Down children.” They confront *other reasons* that make this not only a very difficult decision, but a complex one.

Further comments pointed to the *inability to prove* that DS was the ONLY reason and the *impracticality of enforcement*.

What kind of “form” would women and families have to fill out? What would it mean if the Bill was expansive, prohibiting *all* cases of DS diagnosis? Would the woman have to check in at a clinic periodically and the progress of her pregnancy monitored (ultimately by the State). What, if any, involvement would the State have to provide to ensure the upbringing of the child by a mother who may be single, poor and with two other children to care for?

In sum, participants questioned the *premise* of the Bill and the *practicality* of the Bill.

Citizens at deliberative forums often exhibit a kind of middle ground common sense in these matters -- something that is often missing from bills such as these.