



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on October 10, 2013

New Calif. Law Allows Nurses, Midwives to Perform Abortions

California Governor Jerry Brown (shown) has signed a bill into law that allows nurses and midwives in the state to perform abortion procedures on babies up to 12 weeks in gestation. The supposed goal of A.B. 154, sponsored by Democratic Assemblywoman Toni Atkins, is to make the procedure more accessible in areas where abortionists don't usually set up shop, like in rural parts of the state or inner-city areas.



"Access to healthcare should not depend on where you live," said Atkins in a statement before passage of the measure. "For rural women or those in heavily populated urban areas, a shortage of abortion providers can mean burdensome travel or long waits to be treated." She insisted that the bill "helps address this shortage and will make early abortions available to women by trained professionals in a timely fashion and in their own communities."

Previous California law, the bill's text states, made it "a public offense, punishable by a fine not exceeding \$10,000 or imprisonment, or both, for a person to perform or assist in performing a surgical abortion if the person does not have a valid license to practice as a physician and surgeon."

Under the new law nurse practitioners, certified nurse midwives, and physician assistants will be allowed to perform first-trimester "aspiration" abortions, in which a pre-born baby is ripped, piece-by-piece, from his mother's womb with an apparatus not unlike a powerful vacuum cleaner.

Atkins insisted that "increasing the number of trained healthcare providers who can perform abortions on a timely basis without requiring significant travel will improve the lives of women and their families in many ways."

Oregon, Montana, Vermont, and New Hampshire also allow nurse practitioners, midwives, and physician assistants to perform suction abortions, while, previous to passing the law, California only allowed those medical professionals to administer drug-induced abortions.

Gov. Brown offered no statement upon signing the bill, but the state Assembly's Republican caucus leader, Brian Jones, called the measure "dangerous for women," adding that "it's truly disheartening and disingenuous that Governor Brown and legislative Democrats created a law to lower the standard of care for the women under the guise of creating access."

The California Catholic Conference, also weighed in on the new law, warning that it will make the abortion procedure even more dangerous than it already is to mothers. "The often repeated mantra ... is that abortions ought to be safe, legal, and rare," said Bishop Gerald Wilkerson of Los Angeles in a statement. "With this change in California's law, abortions are merely legal — no longer safe and ... rare."

Anissa Smith of the California Pro-Life Council said that the new law "is not about helping women. It is specifically designed to trivialize what an abortion is, and its risks. Reducing the medical standards for



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abortion ... defies logic for those who say they care about women.”

The [Associated Press](#) noted that under a 2007 pilot program, “8,000 aspiration abortions already have been provided by non-doctors in California. Data from the University of California-San Francisco program showed doctors and non-doctors performing the procedures with complication rates below two percent.”

“This is a very safe procedure, and we now have a very large study to show that this does not compromise safety,” the [New York Times](#) quoted Dr. Tracy Weitz, who led the study, as saying.

But [LifeSiteNews.com](#) noted that Weitz’s study “found that abortions performed by non-physicians had twice the rate of complications as those performed by doctors — a difference Weitz called “clinically equivalent,” according to LifeSiteNews.

Dr. Val Smith, a statistician in behavioral science, testified to a California Assembly committee looking into the bill last April that “the indisputable fact is that expanding the categories of licensed abortionists will compromise the quality of women’s health in California.”

While one Democratic state legislator backing the bill, State Senator Hannah Jackson, decried a “growing shortage of abortion providers [that] creates a significant barrier for women,” a 2008 report by Planned Parenthood’s *de facto* research arm, the Guttmacher Institute, noted that nearly one third of the nation’s abortionists reside in California.

In related news, LifeSiteNews reported that Governor Brown also signed a bill lowering the operating standards for the state’s abortion facilities. “A.B. 980 by Assemblymember Richard Pan reverses health regulations intended to hold abortionists’ offices to the same standards as other surgical facilities,” reported the pro-life news site. By contrast “other states, such as Texas and Virginia, have been increasing office regulations after reading about the filthy conditions of abortion offices like Kermit Gosnell’s and others across the nation.”

Brown’s office insisted that the bill was part of seven measures he signed designed to “support the health and well-being of women in California.”

Photo of Gov. Jerry Brown: AP Images



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