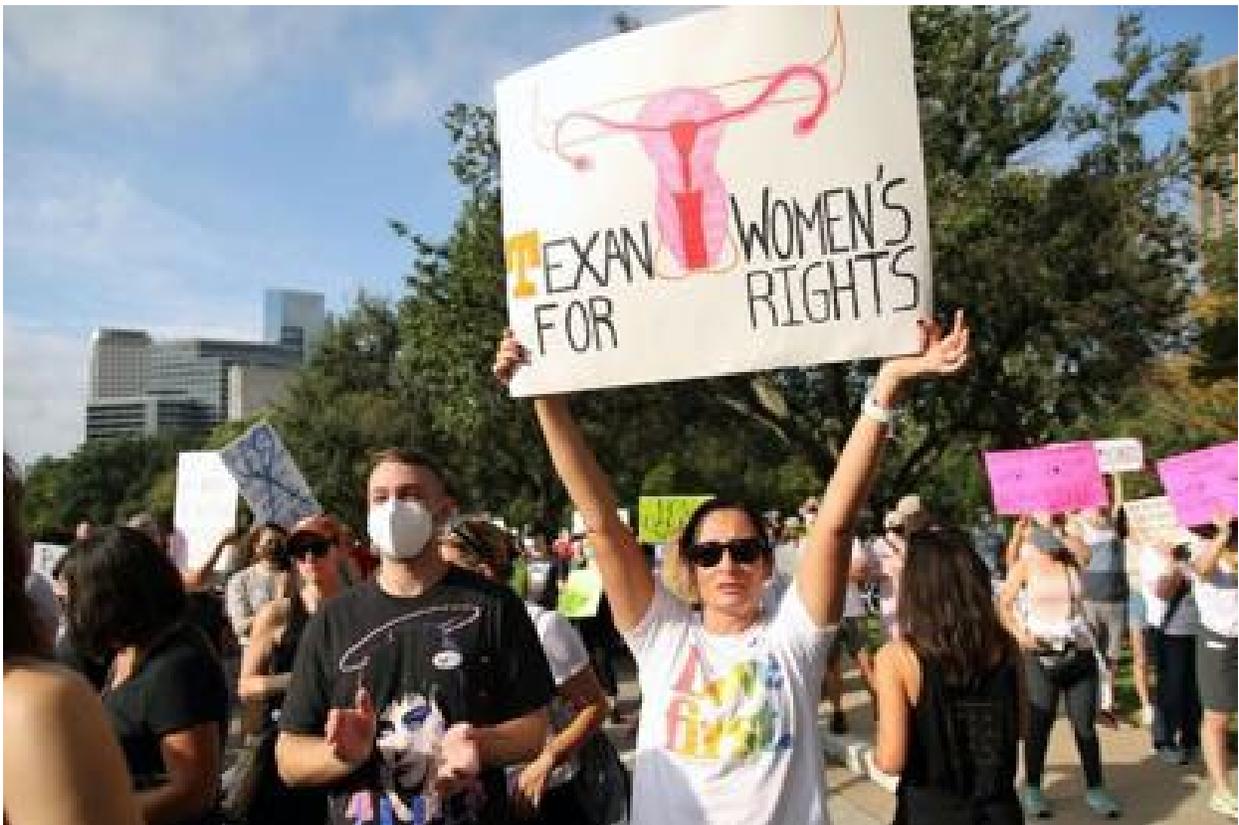


New ad about women's healthcare is 'dishonest,' critics argue

By Bethany Blankley | The Center Square contributor Aug 1, 2022



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(The Center Square) – Doctors and advocates for women and children are taking issue with an ad claiming Texas women don't have access to emergency medical treatments because of Texas' abortion ban.

The group, Mothers Against Greg Abbott, published a video last week depicting a fictional scenario about a pregnant woman being told her baby may not live is full of “fear mongering” and mistruths, critics argue.

In it, an actor playing a doctor tells another depicting a pregnant woman that her baby is likely to be born with a “catastrophic brain abnormality,” would only live hours after birth, experience “a multitude of seizures,” and suffer. Her only option, the doctor implies, is to have an abortion, which she can’t have because that’s “up to Greg.” An actor portraying her partner asks who Greg is.

The doctor pretends to call Gov. Greg Abbott to ask if she can have an abortion, says Abbott said “no,” and then leaves them by saying, “Best of luck to you.” The video closes, asking, “Whose choice should it be?”

The group’s founder, Texas resident Nancy Thompson, told MySanAntonio.com, “The idea came about from our film team because we were trying to get a message across that not every abortion issue is black and white. It’s not always easy. It’s a hard choice.”

The video implies that abortions are prohibited in Texas in cases of medical emergencies. However, the bipartisan law includes exceptions for medical emergencies, defining them as “a life-threatening physical condition aggravated by, caused by, or arising from a pregnancy that, as certified by a physician, places the woman in danger of death or a serious risk of substantial impairment of a major bodily function unless an abortion is performed.”

Kim Schwartz with Texas Right to Life told The Center Square the video “is disgusting.”

“Families that receive heartbreaking diagnoses for their children deserve love and support, not distasteful punchlines like this commercial,” she said. “The pain of losing a child is unfathomable. Leftists like to paint abortion as an act of compassion in these circumstances, but true healing is brought by

honoring and dignifying the baby's life. Every child is beautiful and valuable, no matter how long or short they may live;" many nonprofits exist "to give parents hope in the midst of their grief."

The ad is "part of a larger propaganda campaign," she adds; "abortion activists and mainstream media work hand-in-hand to hide the real issue. They exploit rare, heartbreaking cases like disability, rape, and life of the mother to justify the more than 90% of abortions that are committed out of convenience. Not only is this abhorrent, but it's often untrue."

The media is also trying to "scare doctors and pregnant women about miscarriages," she said, falsely claiming Texas' abortion ban blocks miscarriage treatment. The law states "[a]n act is not an abortion if the act is done with the intent to...remove a dead, unborn child whose death was caused by spontaneous abortion," the clinical term for a miscarriage.

Cindi Castilla, president of **Texas Eagle Forum**, told The Center Square the video suggests that "a disabled baby will not suffer when ripped to pieces while it is in the womb instead of being allowed to be born and helped to survive if possible. If the baby is born and dies, it would do so in its mother's arms. Any mother with a heart should want to be with her child as it passes from this life. We hope viewers will see that the line of thinking presented in the video is foundationally messed up."

Those arguing that women can't receive life-saving procedures are potentially putting them in danger, she adds. "They may be encouraging them not to seek medical help through a tragic miscarriage or ectopic pregnancy," she said. "These situations have never been considered an abortion in Texas and women are obviously allowed to get care."

Houston-based retired OB-GYN Dr. Milinda Morris, who practiced for 35 years and delivered over 6,000 babies, told The Center Square the ad is "intellectually dishonest."

“To make parents think they have to carry an abnormal baby to term and be delivered with extreme suffering afterwards is very disingenuous,” she said. “Because that is not what happens. A lot of times babies won’t make it to delivery and procedures used to help women in these cases aren’t abortions. Babies that survive won’t last more than a few days and they are kept very comfortable until they pass. No one is denied care in these situations and patients are properly cared for with compassion.”

“Many women also have no desire to have abortions due to potential genetic abnormalities and screening tests aren’t always correct,” she adds. Attorney General Ken Paxton has issued a clarification about the law, and the legislature has allocated over \$100 million to Texas’ Alternatives to Abortion program. A new free resource, FamilyResources.texas.gov, highlights numerous free or low-cost services available to assist with pregnancy care, healthcare, parenting, child support, childcare, adoption, financial assistance, 24/7 mental health support, among other services. Texas “will continue providing care and assistance to women and families as they seek support during this important time in their lives,” Gov. Abbott said when launching the site. “Everyone should feel supported when caring for their loved ones and growing families.”

Sen. Jane Nelson, who’s helped manage the state budget for years, said, “Women’s health funding is at an all-time high in Texas.” More than \$350 million is dedicated to preventative health services for women, including family planning, and more than \$1.1 billion has been allocated to support foster children since 2017.