



ALLiance for the FAMILY Foundation Philippines, Inc. (ALFI)

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April 29, 2008

The Honorable Congressman Arthur Y. Pingoy

Chairman, Committee on Health

House of Representatives

Constitution Hills, Quezon City 1126

Re: Proposed House Bill No. 2753, the “Women’s Right to Know Act”

Dear Chairman Pingoy:

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to be represented at the Public Hearing of April 29, 2008.

We are enclosing our Position Paper in opposition of this Bill.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to present our views.

Very truly yours,

(original signed)

DIONISIO DONATO T. GARCIANO

President/CEO

H.B. 2753 – A RESPONSE

The Alliance for the Family Foundation (Phils.) strongly objects to the intent of H.B.2753, and even more to the premise behind it, which is that artificial contraception is a good thing, and will benefit Filipino women. It is not, and it will not. Rather, it is a harmful thing, and it will do great harm to them.

The Explanatory Note accompanying H.B. 2753 has good things to say, commencing with recognition of the fact that “there is a deficiency in the dissemination of information regarding health care to women.” It goes on to note that “The Constitution, Article 11, Section 15 provides that ‘The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them,’ and under the Constitution, Article 11, Section 12, the State is also mandated to equally protect the life of the mother and the life of the unborn from conception.” These are among the most noble principles of the Filipino people. However, as can be seen from the bill’s full title, “AN ACT TO PROTECT THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE TO INFORMATION ABOUT REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE SERVICES, the bill is not about health care, nor about protecting the lives of mothers or of their children in the womb. The common and accepted meaning of “reproductive health care services” is artificial contraception and abortion. Neither artificial contraception nor abortions are health care – they are means of preventing the birth of children. And they are inseparable: there is no country on earth where general acceptance of artificial contraception has not been followed by general acceptance of abortion. This occurs because all methods of artificial contraception sometimes fail. In France, for example, two-thirds of unwanted pregnancies, more than one of every five pregnancies there, occur in women who are using contraception at the time.¹ Since the very reason for using artificial contraception is that the birth of a child is seen as an evil to be avoided, when it fails abortion is often viewed as a mandatory next step by the user. The Philippines will not be an exception to this, because it is a result of the workings of human nature, once contraception has been accepted.

But there is an even more direct connection between artificial contraception and abortion: many of the commonly-used methods of contraception themselves act as abortifacients, at least some of the time. This is true of Intra-Uterine Devices, or IUD’s, and all hormonal contraceptives, which includes the pill, suppositories, injectables, and implantables such as Norplant. As noted in H.B. 2753, our constitution protects the life of a child from conception. All of the contraceptives just listed act at least some of the time to prevent implantation of a newly-conceived child into the lining of her mother’s womb. When this occurs, the child dies. This information is contained in the manufacturer’s literature for these contraceptives, which is provided to doctors who will prescribe them. It is not a matter of scientific controversy. There are those who have attempted to make it so by changing the definition of human being to exclude newly-conceived children, but – in addition to being false and immoral logic – this is irrelevant here, as we have so wisely recognized the humanity of the most vulnerable Filipinos in our constitution. Thus, the use of abortifacient contraceptives violates our fundamental law, as well as the deepest beliefs of our people, who value all human life, not just the wanted ones.

¹ 1 and *Human Reproduction* , news release, April 30, 2003

Finally, numerous health problems are associated with the use of all forms of artificial contraception, including the condom, which has seen a vast increase in its availability and use accompanied by a vast increase in the incidence of sexually-transmitted diseases, including HIV infection and AIDS. Numerous facts could be listed in support of this, but a single one is sufficient to demonstrate the scope of this phenomenon: In the United States, where condoms are nearly as common as candy, there are approximately four million NEW cases of sexually-transmitted diseases among TEENAGERS every year.² This would translate into more than a million new cases annually here in the Philippines, if we become as sexually sophisticated as the Americans are – but with an important difference: the Americans can afford treatment. As an aside, it should also be mentioned that approximately one-third of American women become pregnant at least once as teenagers.³ And to reiterate, use of artificial contraceptives themselves is associated in the prescribing medical literature with heart attack, embolism, stroke, cancer, gallbladder disease, diabetes and hypertension, among other diseases. Thus, they are not only killers of children, but sometimes of adult women as well.

We do not want to leave the impression that we are opposed to the moral right, and in fact the moral duty, of parents to plan their families in accordance with what is good, as they are best able to learn it. We are not. Rather, we wholeheartedly support this right and duty. However, even those individuals whose consciences lead them to other conclusions are obliged to obey the law, particularly in matters of life or death. As has been stated several times, our fundamental law protects all human life. The State, moreover, has a much higher duty to work for the preservation of life than any individual does. It must be extremely careful to enact only legislation that supports human life, and none that attacks it or weakens its protections. How can these apparently conflicting rights and duties -- to plan one's family, and to preserve human life - - be reconciled? Fortunately, there is a very good solution. That is Natural Family Planning, or NFP. Time does not permit an explanation of the effectiveness, safety and benefits of NFP here, but there is peer-reviewed scientific literature supporting these, including a major trial conducted in the Peoples Republic of China.⁴

There is clearly a choice in front of the Filipino people. We can either take measures to become a contraceptive and abortive society, as so many are now. Or we can work to preserve human life, and the values that make our society – despite the degrading poverty we must all work hard to end – one of the happiest and most supportive of the equality of women and men, in the world. That choice is largely up to you, our legislators. We, at ALFI, hope and pray that you will make a wise choice, including rejecting HB2753, with all its harmful consequences – and even more so the worldview behind it.

For the ALLIANCE FOR THE FAMILY:

(original signed)

DIONISIO DONATO T. GARCIANO

President/CEO

² American Social Health Association/Kaiser Family Foundation, STDs in America: How Many Cases and at What Cost?, 1998.

³ Henshaw S.K. (2003). U.S. Teenage Pregnancy Statistics with Comparative Statistics for Women Aged 20-24. New York: The Alan Guttmacher Institute.

⁴ "Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Natural Fertility Regulation Programme in China", Bulletin of the Ovulation Method Research and Reference Centre of Australia 27.4 (2000)]