



Good morning. I'm Jamie Lynn Crofts, the Legal Director for the ACLU of West Virginia. I am also a woman who has been poor and unable to afford trips to the doctor. And I'm here to speak in opposition to HB 4012.

The sponsors of this bill have said that its purpose is to stop women from having abortions. That's not only unconstitutional—it's immoral.

Whether the people in this room like it or not, abortion is a constitutional right. It is protected under both the state and federal constitutions. What HB 4012 would declare to the world is that, in West Virginia, only people who have money should be able to exercise their constitutional rights.

HB 4012 would take insurance coverage away from poor women who need abortions. It is not up to the legislature to determine why a particular woman needs an abortion—it is up to a woman and her doctor. And the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals ruled 25 years ago that the state can't ban Medicaid coverage for abortion. It is, simply, unconstitutional.

Something people often forget is that restricting access to abortion doesn't restrict the demand for abortion. When women don't have access to safe abortions, they have unsafe abortions. Safe, legal, and accessible abortion quite literally saves women's lives. But, on medicine, don't listen to me—listen to the West Virginia section of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, who also oppose this bill.

Being forced to carry an unwanted pregnancy to term has innumerable psychological, physical, and economic effects on a woman's life. It makes her less likely to finish school and more likely to be unable to financially care for her family.

Please, show the women of West Virginia that you care about their health and their lives. Vote no on HB 4012.