STATE OF ARIZONA

JANET NAPOLITANO
GOVERNOR

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April 25, 2006

The Honorable Jim Weiers
Speaker of the House
Arizona House of Representatives
1700 West Washington
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Re: House Bill 2776: abortion; parental consent

Dear Speaker Weiers:

Today I vetoed House Bill 2776, which would have amended Arizona's parental consent law, A.R.S. § 36-2152.

This bill is unnecessary to achieve the stated intent of many of its supporters. The basic evidentiary standards for judicial bypass of the parental consent requirement are already set forth in case law. *See In re B.S.*, 205 Ariz. 611, 74 P.3d 285 (Ct. Ap. Div. 1 2003). House Bill 2776 recasts these standards and imposes an additional requirement that the pregnant minor consult with a physician before seeking the judicial by-pass. Requiring consultation with a physician, as opposed to other medically trained personnel, would impose an unduly burdensome cost.

A more effective strategy in reducing the number of abortions in Arizona is to reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies in the first place and to assure teenagers who do become pregnant that all children carried to term will be well cared for. The good news is that teen birth and pregnancy rates have started to decline, and the percentage of teenagers who report having had sexual intercourse has dropped from 55% in 1995 to 43% in 2005. Unfortunately, Arizona's teen pregnancy rates remain significantly higher than the national average, and more must be done.

We need a system that offers medically accurate information about reproductive health, including abstinence, but not "abstinence only." In addition, we must properly care for the children born to teenage mothers. My budget funds important programs such as the High Risk Perinatal Program, vaccines for underinsured children, and Kids Care Outreach at AHCCCS. It also calls for more adequate funding for the Child Safety and Permanency program at DES. Unfortunately, to date, the legislature has not seen fit to provide in its budget the funding I've sought for these programs.

I stand ready to work with the legislature to develop these and other measures aimed at caring for the children of teenage pregnancies and discouraging such pregnancies from occurring at all.

Yours very truly,

Janet Napolitano
Governor

JN:TN/jm

cc: The Honorable Ken Bennett
The Honorable John M. Allen

Passed the House March 7, 20 06

by the following vote: 39 Ayes

18 Nays, 3 Not Voting

Speaker of the House

Cheryl Laube
Asst Chief Clerk of the House

Passed the Senate April 18, 20 06

by the following vote: 17 ayes

12 Nays, 1 Not Voting

President of the Senate

Secretary of the Senate

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT OF ARIZONA
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR

This Bill received by the Governor this

19th day of April, 20 06

at 10:39 o'clock a. M.

Secretary to the Governor

Approved this _____ day of

_____

at _____ o'clock _____ M.

VETO

_____
Governor of Arizona

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT OF ARIZONA
OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF STATE

This Bill received by the Secretary of State

this 25 day of April, 20 06

at 3:28 o'clock P. M.

Janice K. Brewer
Secretary of State

H.B. 2776