



Massachusetts
Family Institute

MFI Brief

HB 1211

In 2007, 22-year-old Laura Smith died undergoing an abortion in an unlicensed abortion facility on Cape Cod. Unfortunately, at least 16 similarly unlicensed “clinics” are currently in operation in Massachusetts, leaving women vulnerable in uninspected facilities. Such clinics are neither regulated nor inspected to meet the legal definition of a “clinic” in M.G.L. ch. 111, §52. While we do not know which unlicensed abortion facilities respect proper medical procedures, we have witnessed cases like Laura Smith’s that prove that a lack of accountability puts women at risk.

The Women’s Safety Act is intended to reduce the potential health risks to women from these facilities by amending the definition of “clinic” to include a non-hospital facility that performs more than ten (10) abortions per year. These facilities would then be subject to the same licensing and inspection requirements as other medical facilities in the Commonwealth. Since abortion is one of the most common medical procedures in Massachusetts (over 20,000 per year), surely we can all agree that women deserve to be protected when entering any medical facility.



Did You Know:

- There are at least 16 unlicensed abortion facilities operating in Massachusetts.
- More than half the states require licensing, oversight or inspections of non-hospital abortion facilities; Massachusetts does not.
- Many women in Massachusetts obtain abortions in facilities where there are no inspections and uncertain staff qualifications.
- In 2007 Laura Hope Smith, a resident of Cape Cod, died during an abortion procedure in an unlicensed, non-hospital facility.
- Massachusetts mandates twice-yearly inspections of tanning salons but nothing for unlicensed abortion facilities.

QUICK FACTS

1. The Act requires only two minor changes to the text of the current law to correct a significant, risky omission and increase women’s safety.
2. Regulations are already in place to ensure the safety of medical clinics. The proposed law does not alter existing inspection or licensing protocols.
3. In 2014, MA voters in 11 state legislative districts were asked if their representatives should be instructed to support a law to license and inspect abortion facilities. All local questions received an average 70.5% “yes” vote.

VOTE “YES” ON HB 1211