

Dear Senator,

My name is Beth. My husband Doug and I live in District 11 with our kids, Bill, a student at Lincoln, and Barb, a student at St. Mary's.

I've been paying close attention to the bills that have already been filed for the 2019 session, and wanted to express my opinion about SB 6, which would revise certain provisions regarding sonogram and heart auscultation prior to an abortion. I am not in favor of any bill that undermines the ability of women and families to make personal and private medical decisions.

It is important to respect reproductive autonomy and reserve personal decisions regarding health care and family planning to a woman and her chosen support team. Please do not allow politicians with little to no medical knowledge dictate how South Dakota women are supposed to access reproductive health care.

Decisions made during the annual sessions of the South Dakota Legislature have a deep and lasting impact on our state's people and communities. Health care decisions need be made by a woman, her family and her doctor. Please oppose SB 6.

Thank you for serving our state. I appreciate the time and effort it takes to run for office and represent your constituents. Our democracy would not be the same without people like you.

Thank you.

Dear Senator,

I'm writing to you about Senate Bill 19, the bill that would repeal presumptive probation. I understand you are on the Senate Judiciary Committee where the bill will be first heard on Tuesday morning.

While the concept of putting fewer people behind bars may seem like a difficult stance to take in a state as conservative as South Dakota, I think the presumptive probation is too important to repeal.

First, consider the financial implications. When presumptive probation was first introduced in 2013, if the state didn't do anything to curb the rapid increase of inmates, taxpayers would be on the hook for more than \$220 million to build and operate new prisons over the following decade. That's money that could be better spent on other things in South Dakota, like education.

Second, consider that imprisoning low-level drug offender – many of whom are in prison for drug and addiction related crimes – does more harm than good by preventing offenders from staying in their communities where they can work and care for their families and get support for treatment.

Third, presumptive probation still allows judges to sentence low-level offenders to prison time if they believe it is warranted – a necessary element to ensuring judges make decisions based on their expertise and knowledge of the facts in each individual case.

I urge you to vote no on SB 19.

Thank you.

Dear. Senator,

I am writing to urge you to support Senate Concurrent Resolution 7, the legislation that would create a task force to study and make legislative proposals regarding alternatives to incarceration for those convicted of the crime of ingestion of controlled substances.

Though drug use is undoubtedly a serious issue, we can't incarcerate our way out of addiction. Assigning years in prison to those who have a drug present in their system is disproportionate and causes more harm than good to individuals struggling with addiction, their families and their communities.

South Dakota is the only state that imposes a felony for ingestion of a controlled substance. Reducing the penalty for ingestion of a controlled substance from a felony to a misdemeanor would save the state an estimated \$50 million dollars in department of corrections expenses over 10 years, according to a Legislative Research Council's prison and jail cost estimate in 2018.

Instead of using an enormous amount of taxpayer funds to prosecute and incarcerate drug users, reclassifying ingestion as a misdemeanor and investing the resulting savings of state funds in diversion and treatment programs designed to combat addiction would go a long way in helping to solve the underlying problems leading to drug abuse.

I hope you agree Please support SCR 7.

Thank you.

Dear Representative,

I am writing to urge you to vote no on House Bill 1108 when it hits the House floor.

Legislation like House Bill 1108 does little more than codify discrimination against transgender youth and thwart teachers, administrators and counselors from creating a safe and welcoming educational environment for all students in our public schools. Is this the kind of environment we want to create for our children?

The mission of the Sioux Falls School District, if you're not aware, is to educate and prepare each student to succeed in a changing world. That's a lofty mission, but I agree with it. If there is an appropriate way to educate our children on gender dysphoria, I'm all for it. Being transgender isn't a virus. It's not something another student can catch like the flu. It's a way of life – and it's important that our children understand this.

This is not the kind of atmosphere I want my children – an 8th grader at Lincoln and a 1st grader at St. Mary's – to grow up in. I am teaching them to be open minded, fair and loving to all people – regardless of gender, gender identity or sexual preference. I hope the legislature can do the same.

Please vote no on House Bill 1108.

Thank you for your time.