



WREN

Women's
Rights &
Empowerment
Network

scWREN.org

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Visit www.scwren.org and join the movement for better reproductive health policies in South Carolina.
- Share this Information with your friends and get your community to make their voices heard.
- Keep up-to-date with all the legislative issues that deal with reproductive health by following WREN on Facebook, and Twitter.

THE POLICY

Personhood

OVERVIEW

The “Personhood Act of South Carolina” seeks to establish full legal rights — including due process and equal protection — for eggs from the moment of fertilization. In that framework, the bill would have consequences that are significant and far-reaching.

- Personhood legislation would eliminate a woman’s right to make personal private decisions about her own body and her health.
- A woman should have the right to make decisions about her own health care with her doctor and family, without government intrusion.
- By redefining “person” in state law to include fertilized eggs, this bill could interfere with personal, private medical decisions about birth control, access to fertility treatment, management of miscarriage, and access to safe and legal abortion.
- The bill would create a legal dilemma for any doctor who needed to provide medical care to a pregnant woman if that care might endanger an ongoing pregnancy.
- Personhood could also subject a woman who suffers pregnancy-related complications or miscarriage to extensive criminal investigation and jail time or potential charges of reckless endangerment or homicide.
- This type of legislation is so broad, it would outlaw emergency contraception, hormonal birth control pills and other methods of birth control that prevent a fertilized egg from being implanted in the uterus.
- Reproductive health policies based upon scientific research, medicine and widely accepted standards for excellent clinical practice define pregnancy at the moment of “implantation” of a fertilized egg.
- The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists estimate that between one-third and one-half of all fertilized eggs never fully implant in the uterine wall, yet this bill would grant them full constitutional rights.
- The Supreme Court has long held that a woman has a right to choose abortion until the point of fetal viability, but the proposed bill would ban all abortions in the state for any reason - even for victims of rape and incest, or when women’s health or life is at risk.
- Establishing rights from the moment of fertilization would ban life-saving stem cell research from being used to find cures for chronic disease and disabilities.
- In vitro fertilization could be banned since fertilized eggs used in these processes would have legal rights.
- The bill would impact thousands of laws unrelated to abortion, leading to unforeseeable and unintended consequences.
- Because of its broad implications, the bill could allow lawyers and the courts to reinterpret any South Carolina law and regulation that contains the word “person” - from the granting of property rights, to inheritance rights, to court access.