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OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

Office of Research
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Office

S.B. 208
133rd General Assembly

Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

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Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsor: Sen. Johnson

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

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Highlights

- The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) will experience an increase in costs to develop a child survival form and compile the information received into an annual report.
- Public hospitals could experience an increase in costs to complete the required forms and reports if an abortion is performed or attempted in which a child is born alive at the facility. However, only a small percentage of abortions are performed in hospitals and the majority of those are due to medical emergencies, so the impact is anticipated to be minimal.
- It is expected that violations of the bill's requirements will be infrequent, which means that there should be no discernible ongoing effect on the criminal and civil caseloads and related annual operating costs of common pleas courts.
- The State Medical Board may realize an increase in costs as a result of investigations and disciplinary actions related to the bill's provisions.

Detailed Analysis

Child survival form

The bill requires the Director of Health to develop a child survival form to be submitted to ODH each time a child is born alive after an abortion or attempted abortion. The bill specifies certain information that is to be included on the form. The attending physician who performed or attempted an abortion in which a child was born alive is required to complete the child survival form. The physician must submit the form to ODH no later than 15 days after the woman is discharged from the facility. The form is required to be made part of the medical record maintained for the woman by the facility in which the abortion was performed or attempted.

The bill requires each facility in which an abortion is performed or attempted and in which a child was born alive to submit monthly and annual reports to ODH listing the total number of women on whom an abortion was performed or attempted at the facility in which a child was born alive, delineated by the type of abortion procedure that was performed or attempted. The facility must submit the annual report after the end of the state's fiscal year. Each monthly or annual report must be submitted not later than 30 days after the end of the applicable reporting period.

Fiscal effect

ODH will experience an increase in costs to develop the child survival form and make the form available to providers. Public hospitals could experience an increase in costs to complete the required forms and reports if an abortion is performed or attempted in which a child is born alive at the facility. However, only a small percentage of abortions are performed in hospitals, so the number of forms that would be required to be completed is anticipated to be small.

Department of Health annual reports

The bill requires ODH, no later than October 1 of each year, to issue a report regarding data that it has received in the previous year through the submission of abortion facility child survival reports. At a minimum, the annual report must specify the number of women on whom an abortion was performed or attempted and in which a child was born alive after that event, delineated by the type of abortion procedure performed or attempted and the facility in which the procedure was performed or attempted.

Fiscal effect

ODH will experience an increase in costs to compile the information and to issue the required annual report.

Penalties

Criminal penalties

The bill expands the crime of abortion manslaughter to include failure to take measures to preserve the health of a child born alive after abortion, a violation of which is a felony of the first degree. For a violation, the court imposes an indefinite prison term the minimum of which is 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, or 11 years and the maximum is 50% greater than the minimum sentence, a fine of up to \$20,000, or both. The average time served for those committing a first degree felony and released in calendar year (CY) 2016 was 7.62 years.

The bill specifies that a person who purposely fails to comply with the child survival form or abortion facility report submission requirements is guilty of a third degree felony. Failure to comply with the child survival submission requirements is subject to a definite prison term of 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 years, a fine of up to \$10,000, or both. The average time served for those committing a third degree felony and released in CY 2016 was 2.09 years.

Civil penalties

The bill authorizes: (1) a woman on whom an abortion is performed or attempted to file a lawsuit against a person who commits abortion manslaughter, and (2) a woman on whom an abortion is performed or attempted to file a civil lawsuit against a physician or facility that violates the bill's requirements.

Fiscal effect

It is likely that violations of the bill's requirements will be few and infrequent, in particular in the case of physicians who would essentially be risking their careers by exposing themselves to the possibility of a criminal prosecution, civil action, and investigation by the State Medical Board. This suggests that there should be no discernible ongoing effect on the criminal and civil caseloads and related annual operating costs of common pleas courts, which are likely to adjudicate such matters. The marginal annual cost of adding an offender to the prison system administered by the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction is \$3,000 to \$4,000. Additionally, it is possible that the State Medical Board may realize an increase in costs if it receives any questions regarding the bill's provisions, investigates or takes disciplinary action in any cases, or if it provides any education to physicians regarding these requirements.