

Abortion Laws Updated; SB 54

SB 54 amends different statutes pertaining to abortion, adding or revising certain definitions to make them consistent in different statutes, including provisions on licensing abortion facilities, medical emergencies involving abortion, abortions for minors, and abortions at facilities owned by the University of Kansas Hospital Authority. The bill also eliminates certain language, principally in a reference for the web link to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment's website.

Specifically, the bill adds a consistent definition of "bodily function" to one section of law, defining a bodily function to mean physical functions only and not to include mental or emotional functions. The bill also modifies the definition of "medical emergency" to make its use in various statutes consistent by removing references to the determination of gestational age and adding language referring to delays necessary to comply with applicable statutory requirements concerning abortion. Other language is stricken with regard to a medical emergency, eliminating references to the best medical judgment of the attending physician and the determination of an emergency in order to conform with the new definition of "medical emergency." Another provision addressing the University of Kansas Hospital Authority's facilities is modified regarding the meaning of the term "medical emergency" and the performance of abortions under certain enumerated conditions.

The bill also strikes the words "objective, nonjudgmental, scientifically accurate" from language required by law to be posted, along with a web link to information from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, on the websites of private offices, freestanding surgical outpatient clinics, or other facilities or clinics where abortions are performed.

Finally, the bill removes inconsistent language in a statute pertaining to late term abortions to conform with a definitions' statute within the Woman's-Right-to-Know Act concerning abortions performed when the gestational age of the unborn child is less than 22 weeks and where abortions may be performed.