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# RON TUSLER

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 3<sup>rd</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

**Testimony on  
Assembly Bill 183/Senate Bill 187  
May 7, 2019**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on Assembly Bill 183/Senate Bill 187, relating to: certification of abortion providers under the Medical Assistance program.

This bill takes a major step to ensure that taxpayer dollars do not go towards funding abortion. While current state and federal laws and regulations prevent taxpayer dollars from funding abortions, money is fungible and freeing dollars up in one part of a budget will have a direct effect on the other areas vying for funding.

If enacted, the Department of Health Services is required to decertify, under the Medical Assistance (MA) program, a private entity that provides abortion services or is an affiliate of a person that provides abortion services. If a federal waiver is required, then this bill authorizes DHS to seek a waiver or other federal approval. This abortion-service approach prevents an abortion provider, who previously received grants under the MA program from reincorporating as a new entity and receiving fungible funding that can be directed toward abortion, effectively evading the intent to defund abortions.

The prohibition **does not** apply to any hospital that terminates pregnancies under any of the following circumstances: the termination is directly and medically necessary to save the life of the woman; the pregnancy is the result of sexual assault or incest, which has been reported to law enforcement; or the termination is, due to a medical condition existing prior to the abortion, directly and medically necessary to prevent grave, long-lasting physical health damage to the woman. This exception is included to ensure this decertification does not conflict with service requirements placed on these institutions.

Yes, this is an exception. I am pro-life, proud to be, and have no reservations about my beliefs. But I am also pragmatic, seek progress, respect differing opinions on this heated topic, and do not want perfect to be the enemy of the good.

Whether you are a strict pro-life advocate that sees no circumstance as an exception for abortion, or an outspoken abortion activist, in the midst of this heated debate, I hope one thing we can all agree on is taxpayer dollars ought not be used to fund such a controversial and personal procedure.

This bill **does not** ban abortion and this bill **does not** decrease access to women's health providers. In fact, according to official Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) data, there are 162 federally qualified health clinics and rural health clinics across Wisconsin (not including other private health providers that accept Medicaid for women's health needs).<sup>1</sup> Passing this bill will not result in the decline of quality, accessible healthcare for women across the state.

The simple fact is abortion is a highly controversial topic in today's society and will continue to be for quite some time. Because of the bitterly divided public opinion and the indirect funding government provides by freeing up fungible dollars for abortions, this bill simply ensures hard-earned taxpayer dollars cannot be used for this controversial procedure.

Thank you for your consideration.

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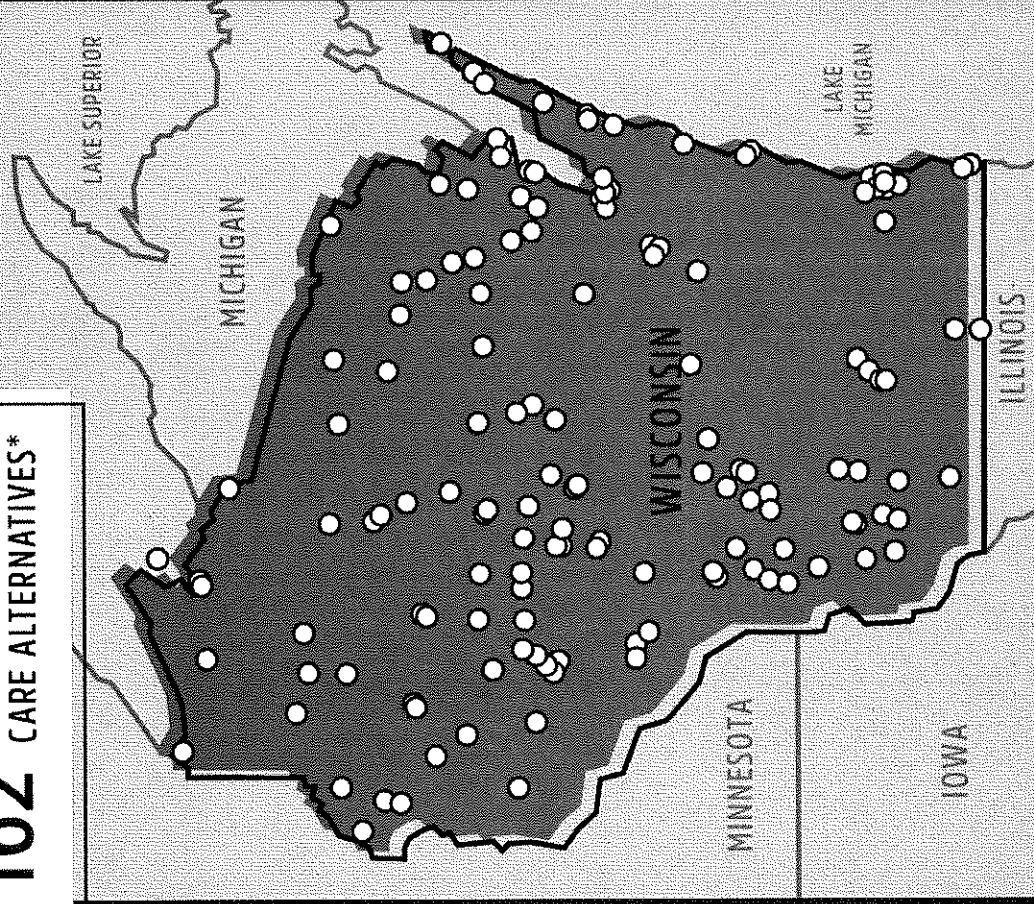
<sup>1</sup> See attached map.

# WOMEN HAVE REAL CHOICES

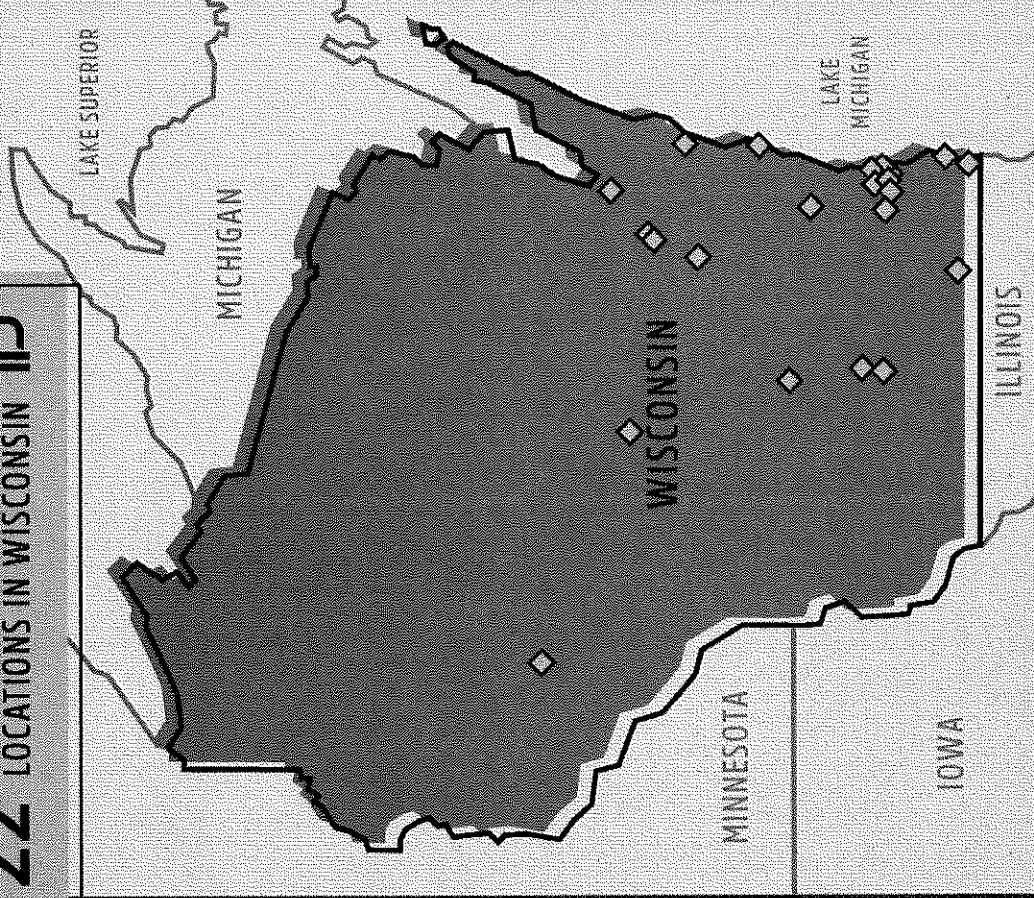
There are 7 health care clinics for every Planned Parenthood.

162 BETTER HEALTH CARE ALTERNATIVES\*

22 PLANNED PARENTHOOD LOCATIONS IN WISCONSIN 



Exclusively Qualified Health Clinics and Rural Health Clinics



\* Data based on information provided by <https://www.cms.gov/Outreach-and-Education/Medicare-Learning-Network-MLN/mlnProducts/Downloads/rhdlistbyprovidername.pdf> (last visited Sept. 3, 2015) and <http://datawarehouse.hrsa.gov/Data/data/download/hccDownload.aspx> (last visited Sept. 3, 2015). **Note: this map does not include the many additional private health providers in Wisconsin who accept Medicaid for women's health needs.**

#DefundPP

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