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DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY

April 15, 2021

RE: DPSFV Supports Senate Bill 379: University of California Health Facility Contracts

Representatives of the Honorable San Fernando Valley Delegation:

On behalf of the Democratic Party of the San Fernando Valley (DPSFV), we are pleased to report that our Executive Board voted to support SB 379, which prohibits the University of California from entering into, amending, or renewing contracts with any health facility contractor or subcontractor in which a health care practitioner is limited in their ability to provide patients with medical information or medical services due to policy-based restrictions of the health facility.

We urge you to support this important piece of legislation.

DPSFV was founded in 1978 and is chartered by the Los Angeles County Democratic Central Committee. Our organization is the coordinating body for a coalition of twenty-one Democratic Clubs located in the six Assembly Districts (38, 39, 43, 45, 46, and 50) which are wholly or partially in the San Fernando Valley.

The DPSFV Political Action Committee met last month to discuss SB 379 and voted to recommend that the DPSFV Executive Board support this vital piece of legislation. The committee noted that past contracts have left the University of California subjected to policy-based restrictions on care that prevent some practitioners and trainees from providing patients with medical information and services that are medically necessary and appropriate. For example, UCSF providers working at Dignity facilities that operate under the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Healthcare (ERD) cannot perform prohibited services in those facilities, even if the provider does not personally agree with or is not contractually required to follow the ERDs. Even if UC providers are permitted to make clinical decisions “consistent with their professional judgment” as the Chancellor describes, the inability to carry out these clinical decisions because treatment is prohibited by religious directives forces UC providers to adhere to the ERDs.

Policy-based restrictions on care have serious implications for patients of color, particularly Black and Latinx low-income patients, whose unequal access to care has been largely dictated by the legacy of structural racism and socioeconomic inequities deeply embedded throughout the health care system. Transparency does not mitigate discrimination. If UCSF Health communicates to their patients what services are prohibited at affiliated facilities, patients denied care still experience discrimination that negatively affects their health.

Catholic control of US hospitals has increased exponentially in the last 15 years. The decision for a public hospital to partner with a restrictive entity loses lives. In the United States, ectopic pregnancies are relatively common and associated with significant maternal morbidity and mortality. The ERDs for Catholic Health Care Services govern the provision of care in Catholic-affiliated hospitals and prohibit the provision of abortion in almost all circumstances. Studies have shown that because of religious bans, women have miscarried after hours of pain and have almost lost their lives in the process.

We strongly urge you to support SB 379.

Please note that DPSFV will be tracking this bill as it travels through the Legislature. Your voting record will be noted and may be considered should you ever seek our endorsement. Your office is always welcome to contact DPSFV if you have any questions.

Sincerely and respectfully,



Chair Sean M. Rivas  
Democratic Party of the San Fernando Valley

cc: Assembly Members Rivas, Friedman, Gabriel, Nazarian, and Bloom  
Senators Hertzberg, Portantino, Stern, Allen and Wiener (Author)

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