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August 8, 2016

The Honorable Ricardo Lara
California State Senate
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 1671 (Gomez)

Dear Senator Lara:

On behalf of the California Women's Law Center (CWLC), we are writing to support the movement of AB 1671, which would amend California's existing Invasion of Privacy law, from the Senate Appropriations suspense file to the floor for a vote. CWLC strongly supports AB 1671 because it would update the current law to more comprehensively protect confidential communications among health care workers.

Currently, California's Invasion of Privacy law prohibits taping confidential communications without both parties' consent. AB 1671 would strengthen this law to also prohibit the distribution or disclosure of illegally taped confidential conversations among health care providers.

This bill grew out of the events last summer when the Center for Medical Progress (CMP) published a series of videos it had surreptitiously recorded at confidential conferences and from private conversations with medical providers. These recordings were heavily manipulated and edited to create a misleading narrative that was strongly contradicted by the full tapes.

Because California's current Invasion of Privacy law only prohibits the taping of conversations, but not their distribution or disclosure, CMP was able to publish these manipulated videos on the internet and widely disseminate them to legislatures and the press. The harm from these disclosures was devastating. Medical providers received death threats; health centers experienced nine times the number of security threats than the previous year; and the resulting vitriol culminated in a shooting in Colorado that left three dead.

Since its founding in 1989, CWLC has worked to break down barriers and advance the potential of women and girls through transformative litigation, policy advocacy and education. A vital part of our mission is to ensure that women have full access to reproductive health care. The California Women's Law Center strongly supports AB 1671, which will protect the privacy rights of California citizens and allow health care providers who have been damaged by the disclosures the appropriate recourse for the harm caused.

Sincerely,



Betsy Butler
Executive Director