

May 8, 2013

Members of the Louisiana House of Representatives:

We are writing to urge your rejection of **SB 162**, a bill that would allow commercial surrogacy or contract pregnancy in Louisiana. The inevitable consequence of this legislation is that it turns women into exploitable commodities through financial inducement that targets young healthy women. SB 162 would entice financially vulnerable women with “reasonable living expenses” in the range of \$25-50,000 to undergo medical procedures that pose serious health risks. These procedures involve multiple daily injections of carcinogenic synthetic hormones in order to prepare her body for the transfer and acceptance of an embryo. As Senator Smith said in committee, it turns the woman into an “oven.”

As a national board member of NOW, Kathleen has worked for years against the sexual commodification of women and naturally segued into reproductive commodification. As a nurse, Jennifer is extremely knowledgeable about the medical issues, is the founder and president of a bioethics organization, and has made three documentary films on these subjects, including the award-winning “Eggsploitation.” We represent the spectrum of women all over this country, pro-choice and pro-life, secular and religious, all united against the exploitation of women as objects for sale.

Commercial surrogacy degrades pregnancy to a service and a baby to a product available to the wealthy. While this exploitive practice is illegal in many countries, in state after state, surrogacy brokers and lawyers who benefit financially from the commercialization of reproduction are behind these bills. Poor and low income women desperate for money are lured to sell their bodies to produce children for others. If passed, Louisiana will join a small group of states like California whose laws give rise to a new profit-driven multi-billion dollar unregulated industry that enriches baby brokers and lawyers at the expense of women.

Lured with the seemingly natural process of providing the “gift of life,” these young women are not aware of the dangers of undergoing multiple injections of synthetic hormones for embryonic implantation. These procedures can have devastating short *and* long term health consequences. Surrogates are pumped with drugs such as Lupron which is *not* FDA approved for fertility use; estrogen which is linked to breast and uterine cancers, heart attack, stroke and blood clots; progesterone; antibiotics; and steroids which are linked to high blood pressure, glaucoma, cataracts, peptic ulceration, and an impaired immune system.

Please do not gamble with the health and well-being of the most vulnerable women in your state. We respectfully urge you to defeat SB 162 by Senator Gary Smith.

Kathleen Sloan
National Organization for Women (NOW)
Board of Directors

Jennifer Lahl
Center for Bioethics and Culture
President and Founder

