

(continued)

- Last April the governor of Illinois signed an executive order that all pharmacists in that state would be required to fill prescriptions for the morning-after pill. Based on the governor's order, Walgreens is requiring their Illinois pharmacists to sign a pledge that they will fill all such prescriptions, and has fired pharmacists refusing to sign the pledge.
- A pharmacist was fired from a K-Mart pharmacy in Middletown, Ohio for refusing to dispense birth control pills.

Things are tough if you're a pharmacist with a conscience. Here are just a few examples:

When my children were young, I worked as a pharmacist at Dayton Correctional Institution. Since this was a state prison for men, I knew I would not be asked to dispense birth control pills, which can act as abortifacients. My most recent job was working weekends at Dayton Heart Hospital. With most heart patients being elderly, and in no need of birth control pills or the morning-after pill, I figured this would also be a safe place for me to work.

Consequently over the years, I've been limited where I could in good conscience work as a pharmacist. I asserted my conscience and religious convictions by refusing to dispense drugs which act as abortifacients (can terminate prenatal life) or used to end life through euthanasia. Encouraging me to work for them. Unfortunately, I'd be fired the first day on the job in retail job solicitations by mail or phone from hospitals, retail stores, and temporary agencies. As you know, there is a nationwide shortage of pharmacists. On a weekly basis I receive

First, I wish to thank Representative Faber and the other sponsors of HB 469, and to all of you for studying and holding hearings on this important subject which affects the ability of pharmacists to make a living in their health-giving profession.

My name is Dr. Kristine Severyn. I am a registered pharmacist in Ohio and Kentucky, with an additional Ph.D. in biopharmaceutics, involving training and research in pharmacology, toxicology, and drug kinetics from the University of Cincinnati. I live in Chairman White's district in Centerville, Ohio, a suburb of Dayton.

Chairman White and other distinguished members of the Health Committee:

**PROponent TESTIMONY ON  
OHIO HOUSE BILL 469  
BY  
KRISTINE M. SEVERYN, R.Ph., Ph.D.  
BEFORE THE  
OHIO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES HEALTH COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1, 2006  
ROOM 018, OHIO STATEHOUSE**

- While 47 states have laws that provide some conscience protection for medical providers or institutions (usually relative to abortion), only two these states allegedly protect the rights of conscience of all health care providers. One of these states is Illinois, whose statute is being used to challenge the Governor's executive order.

- Recently a pharmacist who had religious objections to dispensing the morning-after pill was fired from her job at a Missouri Target store after Planned Parenthood threatened to boycott the chain.

- A Wisconsin pharmacist faced disciplinary action by the state pharmacy board for refusing to dispense drugs which violate his conscience/religious beliefs.

- New Jersey and California are considering a requirement that pharmacists must dispense any drug regardless of moral opposition to that medication.

In addition to the above examples, and considering my past employment as a pharmacist in a state prison, I am sympathetic with medical professionals in multiple states who are refusing to participate in administering lethal injection in death penalty cases. While I am not soft on criminals, one thinks differently about capital punishment when you're the one filling the syringes.

Fortunately, some state legislatures are addressing these injustices by proposing legislation to allow pharmacists to opt out of dispensing drugs they find morally offensive. I ask that you join these states in helping to restore pharmacy to the life-saving profession I joined many years ago.

As Bruce Weinstein, the so-called "Ethics Guy," whose column is syndicated in newspapers and who is the editor of the book *Ethical Issues in Pharmacy*, states:

"The mission of pharmacists, like all health-care professionals, is to promote health and well-being."

Thank you for listening to my concerns this morning. Included with my written testimony are news clippings about these issues.

I welcome your questions.