



Planned Parenthood of Arizona v. Humble, 753 F.3d 905 (9th Cir. 2014)

Topics Covered: Abortions, Regulatory Burdens

Outcome: Very Favorable

Issue

The issue in this case was whether an Arizona law, which requires that physicians who provide drug-induced abortions for their patients must do so according to obsolete Food and Drug Administration (FDA) labeling instructions and thus violate evidence-based protocols, is constitutionally valid.

AMA Interest

The AMA opposes laws regulating medical care that are unsupported by scientific evidence and that impede, rather than serve, public health objectives. Further, the AMA believes physicians should provide medical care according to their best medical judgment, according to accepted medical standards and their patients' informed consent.

Case Summary

An Arizona law barred physicians from prescribing medications to induce abortions, except when the medications are used in accordance with an FDA-approved labeling protocol. The plaintiffs sued to have the law declared constitutionally invalid, in that the labeling instructions would require heavier dosages than are appropriate under current medical standards. The trial court acknowledged that the law would not promote maternal health but nevertheless upheld it. The plaintiffs appealed to the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

On June 3, 2014, the Ninth Circuit reversed and remanded. It held that the Arizona law unreasonably burdened women's access to abortion services and usurped physicians' ability to exercise medical judgment. The trial court therefore erred by failing to preliminarily enjoin the law.

AMA Involvement

The AMA, along with the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, filed an *amicus* brief opposing the Arizona law.

United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit brief