



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on September 10, 2012

Calif. Law Would Permit Midwives, Other Non-Physicians to Perform Abortions

The California Senate passed a bill September 6 that would make it legal for non-physician medical professionals such as midwives to perform abortions under a statewide training program. The measure now awaits Democratic Governor Jerry Brown's signature. (Gov. Brown pictured to the left of the state seal, Sen. Christine Kehoe to the right.)

According to [LifeSiteNews.com](#), the bill (S.B. 623), introduced by Democratic State Senator Christine Kehoe, "extends a program run by the University of California at San Francisco [UCSF], in which nurse practitioners, midwives, and doctors' assistants are trained to perform abortions without any further training in medicine. Kehoe argues the bill is necessary because there aren't enough doctors performing abortions in California."

The [Sacramento Bee](#) reported that the bill extends a UCSF program, begun in 2007, that "evaluates the safety and effectiveness of allowing certain non-doctor medical providers to provide abortions.... The goal is to increase access to the procedure in parts of the state where doctors are scarce." Kehoe noted that the program is "an existing study that's been extended several times, [and] this is an additional extension. Otherwise the study would cease at the end of this month and the practitioners participating in the city would no longer be able to perform this procedure."

The [Life Legal Defense Foundation](#) (LLDF), a California-based pro-life group that has been pressuring the UCSF for its records on the controversial program, explained that the measure was hidden in an unrelated bill at the end of the state's legislative session after previous attempts to pass it had failed. "This bill was originally created to regulate boat paint," Dana Cody, LLDF's executive director, said of the bill carrying the abortion measure. "Now it's regulating and destroying human lives."

The *Bee* noted that several Republican lawmakers criticized the bill, hidden in the boat paint measure, as a last-minute "gut and amend" bill. "I don't understand the germaneness" of boat paint and training for abortions, confessed Republican State Senator Bob Dutton, one of the bill's opponents. "I'm questioning whether this is even appropriate to be brought up."

According to the *Bee*, Dutton's concern "prompted senate leaders to huddle for several minutes on the Senate floor. Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg emerged to tell the upper house that it could vote on the amended bill because it had been through health committees in both houses and cleared the full Assembly."

But according to Focus on the Family's [CitizenLink.com](#) news site, "earlier this year, LLDF filed a formal request with UCSF for information about the program and the people taking part in it. The





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school has not released the information.” Katie Short, LLDF’s legal director, said that “there have been numerous attempts to resist records requests, leaving us wondering what they have to hide. It is important for Californians to find out what is being done in the training program — who are the abortionists conducting the training? How many women are being injured by these non-physician abortionists?”

Cody noted the obvious danger in which such a training program places women. “Abortion is not health care,” Cody told CitizenLink. “Abortion injures women, and women deserve better.”

The *Sacramento Bee* quoted an opposing legislator, Republican State Senator Doug La Malfa, as being troubled “by such a big push for something that could be such a grave health issue. We’re going to have under-qualified people doing these things.”

[In a fact sheet on the program](#), LLDF recalled that two of the doctors who contributed to the training manual for the study were disciplined by the state after women under their care died during abortion procedures. “UCSF has publicly acknowledged Jesse James Joplin, M.D. and Mark Maltzer, M.D. for their contribution to its ‘Early Abortion Training Workbook,’ which was presumably used to train non-physicians to perform surgical abortions,” the fact sheet read. “Joplin has been disciplined by the Medical Board of California for causing the death of a patient and for drug and alcohol abuse while working at Planned Parenthood sites. Dr. Mark Maltzer was successfully sued over the death of a young Latina woman, Diana Lopez. The Department of Health reviewed the incident and found Dr. Maltzer to be deficient in his care while Planned Parenthood ‘failed to exercise oversight responsibility for ensuring the operation of the clinic.’”

The fact sheet also noted that rather than searching for nurses and other medical professionals from the general population for the program, “Planned Parenthood and UCSF recruited the non-physician trainees from existing Planned Parenthood employees or other ‘women’s health specialty’ businesses. Thus, for the most part, the program simply paid to train current Planned Parenthood employees to perform surgical suction abortions.”

Meanwhile, California’s Catholic bishops observed that the “training” program has already cost the lives of thousands of pre-born babies. “With SB 623,” lamented the bishops, “the sponsors and managers of that project will be ‘rewarded’ with more time and more money so they can ... continue training yet more mid-level medical practitioners, who have already performed more than 8,000 abortions.”



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