April 10, 2019

The Honorable Paul Lee
Chair
House Health Committee
11 South Union Street, Suite 410-F
Montgomery, AL 36130-2950

Re: House Bill 314

Dear Chair Lee:

On behalf of ADL (Anti-Defamation League), we urge the House Health Committee to oppose House Bill 314, “An act relating to abortion” (“HB 314”), because it contains language that is offensive to the Jewish Community and infringes on Alabamians’ religious freedom.

Founded in 1913 in response to an escalating climate of anti-Semitism and bigotry, ADL is a leading anti-hate organization with the timeless mission to protect the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment for all. Today, we continue to fight all forms of hate with the same vigor and passion. A global leader in exposing extremism, delivering anti-bias education, and fighting hate online, ADL’s ultimate goal is a world in which no group or individual suffers from bias, discrimination, or hate.

To that end, we view reproductive choice as an issue of personal and religious freedom. Accordingly, we believe that government should not intrude on a woman’s decision about abortion unless it has a compelling state interest. Rather, the decision should be made in consultation with a physician and in accordance with a woman’s own religious or moral convictions.

HB 314’s comparison of a constitutionally protected right to the Holocaust is deeply offensive. It belittles the memory of the six million Jews who were murdered at the hands of the Nazis and misappropriates a profoundly impactful historical event for political purposes. Comparing abortion to the Holocaust is alarming and wrong.

The legislation also infringes on the religious freedom of Alabamians. Although HB 314 comports with certain religions, other faiths, including Reform and Conservative Judaism, permit abortion in the cases of rape, incest, and human trafficking, as well as
serious physical and mental health conditions, criminalized by this bill.\(^1\)\(^2\) As a result, the legislation could violate the Alabama Constitution’s Religious Freedom Amendment where a woman based on her sincerely held religious belief seeks to terminate a pregnancy under these prohibited circumstances.

We therefore urge the Committee to oppose this legislation, which if enacted will undoubtedly be struck down as unconstitutional.

Sincerely,

Allison Padilla-Goodman
ADL Regional Director

cc: House Health Committee
