

# Committee to Protect Health Care: Wisconsin docs urge Michels to stop supporting anti-abortion groups, abortion bans

Posted on Thursday, Sep 15, 2022

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

MADISON, Wis. — Medical professionals across Wisconsin today released a [letter](#) calling on Republican gubernatorial candidate Tim Michels to stop supporting extremist organizations that want to ban abortions and take away a woman's freedom to make her own medical decisions. More than 50 medical professionals have already signed the letter.

“Abortion is health care and Tim Michels' continued big-dollar support for extremist organizations that want to ban abortions even if the mother dies will put Wisconsin women in danger,” said **Dr. Ann Helms, a Milwaukee critical care neurologist and the Committee's Wisconsin State Lead.** “Wisconsin's prohibitions against abortions are already [forcing women to delay life-saving health care](#) because physicians and medical professionals are afraid they'll be criminally prosecuted. By continuing to support abortion bans and writing hundred-thousand-dollar checks to radical anti-abortion groups, Tim Michels is effectively putting women's lives at risk.”

Michels has [donated](#) more than \$200,000 to organizations that oppose abortion and that use controversial methods, including cell phone location tracking and sidewalk interference to intimidate and discourage people from getting abortions. Michels [supports the state's extreme 1849 ban](#) on abortions that forces victims of rape and incest to carry pregnancies to term. Previously, Michels has said that forcing a rape victim to deliver a baby is “not unreasonable,” according to a *Wisconsin State Journal* report June 13, 2004, when Michels ran unsuccessfully for the U.S. Senate.

“As our letter makes clear, physicians are deeply concerned that Tim Michels’ continued support for forced pregnancy will do devastating harm to women experiencing severe complications, rape and incest victims, and women who have been diagnosed with serious diseases that make continuing their pregnancy life-threatening,” said **Dr. Bob Freedland, a La Crosse ophthalmologist**. “As physicians, we want to make clear that abortion bans have serious consequences for women’s health. No politician and no special interest organization should interfere in the medical decision-making process between a woman and her doctor.”

Wisconsin’s abortion restrictions are already tying the hands of doctors and medical professionals who must now define all the emergencies and conditions that could result in a pregnant woman’s death, while facing possible punishment of up to 6 years in prison if a prosecutor disagrees that an abortion was necessary.

“Tim Michels and the radical organizations he supports that want to ban all abortions with no exceptions either have zero recognition of the real-world medical realities pregnant women face – or they simply don’t care that women will die or suffer horribly,” said **Dr. Shefaali Sharma, a Madison OB/GYN**. “Wisconsin women shouldn’t have to continue to suffer because of abortion restrictions or worry that they could die from pregnancy under even more draconian restrictions. Medical professionals should be able to do our jobs to ensure the best outcomes for our patients. Tim Michels should rescind his support of Wisconsin’s cruel abortion ban and stop donating to dangerous extremist anti-abortion organizations.”

## **THE FULL TEXT OF THE LETTER IS BELOW:**

### **Wisconsin Medical Professionals Call on Tim Michels to Halt Support for Abortion Bans and Anti-Abortion Organizations**

As medical professionals across Wisconsin who are concerned about the health, well-being, and freedom of our patients, we call on Republican gubernatorial candidate Tim Michels to cease his promotion of abortion bans and halt any further contributions to anti-abortion causes.

As health care professionals and Wisconsinites, we are compelled to point out the immense harm that enforcing Wisconsin’s 1849 abortion ban, as Tim Michels has said he supports, will have on our patients and women across the state. We’re already seeing the devastating impact of this ban, as pregnant women in Wisconsin

are being [forced to delay life-saving health care](#) because doctors rightfully fear criminal prosecution.

Continued enforcement of this ban by Tim Michels, were he governor, would force more victims of rape and incest to carry pregnancies to term and relive their trauma; pregnant cancer patients to forgo life-saving treatment, women with fetal anomalies to deliver dead babies; and so many more tragic, preventable outcomes.

Yet we also worry that Tim Michels would go further to put women in harm's way. His large financial contributions to the [Pro-Life Wisconsin Education Task Force](#) are [particularly concerning, since Pro-Life Wisconsin](#) supports banning abortion outright — even if the pregnant woman's life is in danger.

Wisconsin women shouldn't have to continue to suffer because of this cruel abortion ban or worry that they could die from pregnancy under even more draconian restrictions. Medical professionals should be able to do our jobs to ensure the best outcomes for our patients. Tim Michels should rescind his support of Wisconsin's cruel abortion ban and stop donating to dangerous extremist anti-abortion organizations.

### ***About the Committee to Protect Health Care***

*The Committee to Protect Health Care is a national mobilization of doctors, health care professionals, and advocates who are building a pro-patient health care majority in Congress and in states so that we can live in an America where everyone has the health care they need to thrive. To learn more:*

[www.committeetoprotect.org](http://www.committeetoprotect.org)