A health care provider’s religious beliefs should never determine the care a patient receives. Yet refusal of care laws allow health care providers like hospitals, doctors, nurses, and health insurance companies, to do just that—refuse to treat a patient seeking an abortion because of religious or moral beliefs.

In addition:
- Sixty-three percent of voters oppose laws that allow hospitals to refuse to provide a woman with information or referrals about abortion because of religious or moral beliefs.
- Sixty-two percent of voters oppose laws that allow insurance companies to refuse to cover a woman’s abortion because of religious or moral beliefs.
- Sixty-two percent of voters oppose laws that allow doctors or nurses to refuse to provide a woman with information or referrals about abortion because of religious or moral beliefs.

There are a number of federal laws – most notably the so-called Church Amendments, Coats Amendment, and Weldon Amendment – that allow various health care providers to refuse to provide care to a person seeking an abortion. The Weldon Amendment – which is not permanent, but rather has been attached yearly to the annual Labor-HHS appropriations bill – is the most far-reaching. It allows insurance plans to refuse to cover abortion and even allows individual health care providers like doctors and nurses to refuse to provide patients with referrals for abortion.

These religious exemption laws allow hospitals, doctors, and nurses to determine a patient’s care based on religious beliefs, not based on what is best for the patient’s health and circumstances.

In a March 2017 nationally representative survey done on behalf of the National Women’s Law Center, 61 percent of voters showed opposition to refusal of care laws, with 43 percent of voters strongly opposing the laws. Majority opposition to these laws includes voters who identify as Catholic (57 percent oppose) and as Protestant (51 percent oppose).
i. 42 U.S.C. § 300a-7(c) (2017).