

Courtesy of New Jersey Right to Life, 6/9/26

**Analysis of 6/8/26 Assembly Appropriations Committee  
Amendments to ACS A2218**

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Yesterday, NJRTL joined other pro-life and pro-family organizations and concerned citizens in testifying before the Assembly Appropriations Committee in opposition to A2218/S2260.

Despite significant public concerns, the committee advanced the bill after last-minute **A2218 (ACS) Amendments** were adopted with little notice. The legislation could now be considered by the full Assembly as early as Thursday, June 11.

Please take a moment to read New Jersey Right to Life's analysis of the June 8 amendments below and learn why this legislation remains a serious threat to free speech, conscience rights, and parental rights.

Then contact your Assembly members immediately and urge them to vote NO on A2218/S2260.

A2218/S2260 can be voted on as early as June 11th. The bill passed the Senate on May 28th. Amendments were added on 6/8 in the Assembly Appropriations Committee. After the bill passes the Assembly, it will then have to go back to the Senate for concurrence.

Action needed: Please contact your two Assembly Members and State Senator and urge them to Vote No on A2218/S2260.

The 6/8/26 **Fox News** article notes: "If enacted, the measure would make New Jersey the first state in the nation to explicitly criminalize such interference."

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**New Jersey Right to Life Review of the June 8, 2026 Amendments to A2218**

The Assembly Appropriations Committee adopted **amendments to A2218** on June 8, 2026 — the same day as the public hearing — before rushing the bill out of committee. Proponents described these changes as "narrowing," but they represent only a tactical restructuring that keeps the bill's core anti-speech and sanctuary-state agenda intact while making it even more dangerous for peaceful pro-life advocates.

**Key Amendments and Concerns**

**Criminal Coercion / Interference Provision (Section 5)**

The amendments added "by force or threat of force" language to parts of the new crime of "interference with reproductive health care services."

Concern: This change is largely cosmetic. The bill still creates an unnecessary new criminal offense with vague terms like "intimidation," "coercion," and causing "emotional harm" or "reputational harm." New Jersey already has strong laws against violence, threats, assault, trespass, and obstruction. This provision is designed to target peaceful sidewalk counselors, prayer volunteers, and those offering help to women outside abortion facilities — activities protected by the First Amendment.

**Civil Liability for Harm (New/Amended Section 6)**

The most speech-chilling language — allowing liability for causing “reputational harm, financial harm, mental anguish, or emotional harm” — was moved out of the criminal section and turned into a broad standalone civil cause of action.

Concern: This is a major escalation. Abortion providers, clinics, and activists can now file civil lawsuits for “emotional harm” or damaged reputation with no requirement of force, no need for a criminal conviction, and automatic exposure to minimum damages, punitive awards, and attorney’s fees. This weaponizes the courts against pro-life speech, crisis pregnancy centers, and sidewalk ministry. The mere threat of expensive litigation will chill life-saving work and deter compassionate outreach to women in crisis.

### **Provider Immunity / Licensing Boards**

The amendments added a narrow exclusion for conduct that “deviates from the applicable professional standard of care.”

Concern: This is a weak, cosmetic carve-out. The bill still grants the abortion industry special blanket protections and immunity from normal medical licensing board discipline that no other medical field receives. It shields providers from accountability even when substandard care harms women.

### **Overall Scope and Process**

The amendments largely harmonized the Assembly bill with the Senate version but left the dangerously broad definitions of “reproductive health care” untouched. These definitions explicitly include abortion, gender-affirming care, and assisting out-of-state travel for these procedures. Substantive changes were dropped on legislators and the public the same day as the hearing, with no meaningful opportunity for review.

### **Bottom-Line Assessment**

These June 8 amendments do not fix the bill’s fundamental flaws. They simply shift the most dangerous, speech-suppressing elements from criminal prosecution to easier civil lawsuits — lowering the legal bar and making it simpler to harass and silence peaceful pro-life citizens. A2218 remains a viewpoint-discriminatory sanctuary-state measure that:

- Places abortion access and gender-affirming procedures above First Amendment free speech rights.
- Creates redundant new penalties and unknown taxpayer costs for enforcement.
- Treats the abortion industry as a specially protected class above normal medical oversight.
- Further entrenches New Jersey as a destination for abortion tourism while marginalizing those who defend unborn children and offer women real choices.

### **Conclusion**

The June 8 amendments are a superficial adjustment, not a genuine improvement. They make A2218 more insidious by enabling easier civil attacks on peaceful, constitutionally protected pro-life activities. New Jersey lawmakers should reject this bill outright and uphold the constitutional rights, free speech, and compassionate ministry of New Jersey citizens. Protect free speech. Protect women in crisis. Reject A2218.

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