



## **TMA STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF SEN. RICHARD BRIGGS, MD**

December 19, 2022

“The Tennessee Medical Association (TMA) reiterates its support for Tennessee state Sen. Richard Briggs, MD, a longstanding leader and member within our organization, for his recent comments on behalf of physicians, women, and families in the state.

Like many elected officials, [Sen. Briggs has aligned his position with that of his constituents](#), Tennesseans who recognize the unintended consequences of the state’s recently enacted abortion ‘trigger’ law and [want it amended](#).

As written, the law contains no legal exceptions—not even for the life and health of the mother. Sen. Briggs has reasonably indicated he would like to see the law offer clear exceptions when the mother’s life or health are at risk, for non-survivable fetal anomalies, and rape and incest.

The affirmative defense in place for physicians caring for affected patients is merely a legal maneuver that undermines the legislative intent of the law. It places doctors in the unconscionable position of having to choose between saving a patient’s life or committing a felony.

Regrettably, this stance [has subjected Sen. Briggs to political retribution and attempts to disparage his character](#).

Sen. Briggs’ background is one of service. Previously a Knox County commissioner, he has represented Tennesseans in the legislature since 2014 and the Knoxville community as a respected heart and lung surgeon for over 40 years.

He has also heroically served our country. A retired Army colonel with a more than 30-year military career, he served the United States as a combat trauma surgeon during Operation Desert Storm and was awarded the Bronze Star. In recent years, he completed combat tours in Afghanistan and Iraq as a senior war trauma surgeon caring for wounded American troops.

Given Sen. Briggs’ experiences, his real-world perspective and leadership role in this conversation is unique. His counsel around this complex issue should be valued and sought after rather than dismissed. TMA invites other members of the Tennessee General Assembly to disregard similar efforts from outside groups and protect families by joining Sen. Briggs and a majority of Tennesseans [in making needed changes to this law](#).”

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