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SB 95: The Unborn Child Protection from Dismemberment Abortion Act
Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare, February 2, 2015
Michael Schuttloffel, Executive Director, Kansas Catholic Conference

Madame Chair and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for holding a hearing on SB 95, the Unborn Child Protection from Dismemberment Abortion Act. The Kansas Catholic Conference strongly supports this legislation.

On January 24, 1973, two days after the Supreme Court handed down its decision in *Roe v. Wade*, the New York Times editorial board wrote that the “ruling could bring to an end the emotional and divisive public argument” over abortion. In fact, the emotional and divisive public argument had just begun. Today, after forty-two years of seemingly endless legislation, litigation, and protest, the debate over abortion has become detached from the reality of abortion, like a word said over and over until it loses its meaning. The word “abortion” does not bring to mind a procedure so much as it triggers thoughts of political activism. Abortion has become a political question, a position on a survey, a vote on a scorecard, and even a matter of party loyalty.

But, in fact, abortion is none of these things. An actual abortion is something real. It is an act upon a real person, a human person. It is something that actually happens, and in fact, is probably happening somewhere right now.

If passed, this bill will save lives. But it will also remind America what we have been arguing about for so long. Despite the smokescreens and euphemisms and evasions of the other side, we have not been arguing about abstractions like “choice” or “access to care.” Rather, we are arguing about whether the law should allow an adult to rip the arms and legs off of an unborn child. This is the matter at hand, nothing else.

Should it be legal to tear the limbs off of an unborn child? This procedure is used most commonly in the second trimester, which means that we are talking about an unborn child with arms and legs, fingers and toes, her own heartbeat, her own brainwaves, her own blood, and with all of her organs formed and functioning. Should society allow an unborn child, four months along, to be dismembered?

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This is how the United States Supreme Court described dismemberment abortions in the *Gonzales v. Carhart* decision which upheld the ban on partial birth abortions. It is worth quoting at length:

After sufficient dilation [of the cervix], a doctor inserts grasping forceps through the woman's cervix and into the uterus to grab a living fetus. The doctor grips a fetal part with the forceps and pulls it back through the cervix and vagina, continuing to pull even after meeting resistance from the cervix. The friction causes the fetus to tear apart. For example, a leg might be ripped off the fetus as it is pulled through the cervix and out of the woman. The fetus, in many cases, dies just as a human adult or child would: It bleeds to death as it is torn apart limb by limb. The fetus can be alive at the beginning of the dismemberment process and can survive for a time while its limbs are being torn off. The process of dismembering the fetus continues until it has been completely removed. A doctor may make 10 to 15 passes with the forceps to evacuate the fetus in its entirety, though sometimes removal is completed with fewer passes. Once the fetus has been evacuated, the placenta and any remaining fetal material are suctioned or scraped out of the uterus. The doctor examines the different parts to ensure the entire fetal body has been removed.

This is happening in Kansas. There are laws here against animal cruelty, but not laws against this.

The fact that there will be a debate over this legislation -- indeed, the fact that this legislation is even necessary -- is an indictment of our society and even of the very notion of human progress. We look with scorn at the barbarity of earlier generations of human beings, in many cases rightfully so, and yet with all of the progress the human race has made, we in the here and now allow our children to be torn apart, piece by piece, limb by limb. The doorway to an abortion clinic is a portal to a place where the normal rules governing our society do not apply. For all of the abortion industry's rhetoric about "turning back the clock on women," it is in their facilities that the clock is turned back to the most primitive epochs in human history, when the strong could inflict any horror upon the weak, and there was no law to protect the vulnerable.

Sadly, passage of this bill will not stop the slaughter. It will merely end one particularly barbaric method of killing unborn children, one that may be painful beyond imagining to the unborn child. Nonetheless, the abortion industry is not satisfied with merely having a license to kill. It must be a license without restrictions. They claim a right to kill with any method they choose, no matter how brutal. Indeed one wonders if they could find a more tortuous method of dealing death if they tried.

Any legislator inclined to vote against this legislation should first visit an abortion clinic and observe this procedure, or at least the aftermath of one. The industry representatives here today will surely be willing to bring you to one of their facilities to see the arms and legs and other remains that are gathered during a dismemberment abortion to ensure that no pieces are left inside the womb. Elected officials visit hospitals and schools and factories all of the time to observe their operations. Call it a fact finding mission. After all, we are told that abortion is just health care and that abortion clinics should be treated just like any other medical establishment.

Go to Planned Parenthood. Look upon their work. See it with your eyes. And then cast your vote.