

Testimony in Support of SCR 1613/HCR 5019
Value Them Both Constitutional Amendment
Joint Meeting of Senate Judiciary and House Federal & State Affairs Committees
January 21, 2020

Chairmen Wilborn and Barker, and committee members,

My name is Jennifer Johnson, and I am a pediatrician living and practicing in Johnson County. I support the Value Them Both Amendment primarily out of my concern for the safety of women and children whose health would be compromised if laws regulating abortion in our state were nullified by the recent KS State Supreme Court ruling.

As a physician, I believe that laws concerning baseline standards for cleanliness and appropriately trained staff at clinics providing abortions should be retained just as we would expect there to be regulatory standards for any medical office, clinic, or hospital where procedures are done on patients. Likewise, informed consent is a basic right of any patient undergoing a medical procedure, and so a woman seeking abortion should be offered explanation of the proposed procedure as well as the known medical risks prior to undergoing an abortion. Therefore, laws surrounding such consent should be protected and allowed to stand.

Finally, as a pediatrician, I have serious concerns that if laws surrounding parental consent for minors seeking abortion were dismantled, adolescent girls would be left without guidance from adults closest to them at a time when they are most vulnerable and in need of support to make a good decision regarding their health and their future. Pediatricians value the role of parents in helping support the health and overall well-being of their children, including those in adolescence, to grow into healthy adults. In my practice, I would not do minor procedures like stitches or IV fluids on a child or adolescent without consent from the parent, much less recommend or embark on a more invasive treatment plan. As a parent of two teenage girls, I would expect my children's physician to do the same. Abortion would certainly fall into the category of an invasive procedure, and as such, parental consent is the standard I would expect.

For the health and safety of women and children in our state, I support keeping the current Kansas laws related to abortion practice in force. I see the Value Them Both Amendment as a way to protect these laws and ensure that the legislature, acting on behalf of the citizens of Kansas, has the ability to establish laws to ensure health and safety of the lives of Kansans.

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