

From: Rabbi Monica Kleinman  
Overland Park, Kansas  
Opponent

To: Special Committee on Federal and State Affairs  
Hearing Date: January 21, 2020  
Room: 346-S

Topic: HCR 5019  
Written Testimony Only

Dear Kansas State Legislature,

I am writing to oppose the passage of HCR 5019 on the grounds of religious freedom. Often we lump together “Judeo-Christian” values, but in this case, the differences between the two faiths could not be more stark. To pass legislation both inspired and influenced by fundamentalist Christian theology is a direct blow to my religious freedom and that of my co-religionists.


Jewish tradition is clear - until a child emerges halfway from its mother’s body it does not constitute a full human being. Exodus 21 establishes the punishment for murder: *He who fatally strikes a man shall be put to death* (verse 12), whereas later in the chapter we read: *When men fight, and one of them pushes a pregnant woman and a miscarriage results, but no other damage ensues, the one responsible shall be fined according as the woman’s husband may exact from him, the payment to be based on reckoning.* (verse 22).

It is abundantly clear that the death of a “preborn” human does not constitute murder of a person, as the punishment for the perpetrator would be death as opposed to merely a fine. To state this further, abortion is not akin to murder.

This clearly establishes the hierarchy of priority of life between mother and child. Jewish tradition places the value of the mother’s life above that of the fetus until the process of childbirth is underway. The proposed legislation, which would deny the mother potentially life-saving medical care regardless of the situation, flies in the face of the mother’s personhood and rejects the balance espoused in our faith tradition.

The proposed legislation would allow one strand of extreme sectarian theology to dominate our legal system in violation of the separation of church and state. I implore you to respect the religious diversity present in the state of Kansas and vote against this measure.

Respectfully submitted,



Rabbi Monica Kleinman