



a path to a positive future

TESTIMONY OF Renee Kuhl
Executive Director, Lawrence Community Shelter
IN OPPOSITION TO HCR 5019

January 17th, 2020

The Lawrence Community Shelter serves 90 individuals a night experiencing homelessness. The individuals include men, women, and families who live in our shelter and receive access to services that meet their basic needs, as well as coordination to other kinds of care and supportive services.

What we know from the last 40 years of a rancorous national war over access to women's healthcare is that men and women of means will always be able to access abortion in this country. I am one of those women. In 2018, I had an abortion when I was living and working in Chicago, Illinois. That procedure was actually covered by my employer's health insurance, and the co-pay was only \$100. Abortion access ensured my ability to continue to advance in my career and accrue further wealth and class privilege. There is no question in my mind that without access to abortion I would not have been able to return to Kansas this fall to run the Lawrence Community Shelter.

However, the strategy and vision of reproductive healthcare pursued by Kansas anti-abortion extremists will be used to ensure that women who live in the Lawrence Community and their children are locked in a cycle of generational poverty. Access to free reproductive healthcare is essential to ensuring that women in poverty have a way out: towards housing, full employment, education, fulfilling relationships, and long-term success and stability.

By paving the way for anti-abortion extremists to overrule the Kansas Supreme Court, HCR 5019 will ensure that that is not the case for the poorest women in Kansas. The "Value Them Both" amendment is essentially a fetal personhood amendment in disguise. It disrupts the personhood of pregnant women and will ensure that women in poverty seeking access to abortion are further traumatized, disenfranchised, and economically marginalized.

Every abortion should be like mine. Professional, affordable, covered by insurance, and easy to access. Abortion is a life-giving, life-saving medical procedure that any and all individuals should be able to access on demand, affordably, and whenever they decide that they need it. The state of Kansas has no business regulating the personal healthcare decisions of its most vulnerable citizens: women in poverty.

Sincerely,

Renee Kuhl