

To: Senate Judiciary Committee
House Committee on Federal and State Affairs

Re: Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 1613

January 19, 2020

I am opposed to any amendment to the constitution of the State of Kansas that further curtails the right of a woman to receive a safe and legal abortion. I fear that abortion is already overly restricted, forcing women to seek abortions in other states or to go through with pregnancies that might otherwise have been terminated. Such restrictions disproportionately hurt poor women and women of color.

As I've attempted to understand the anti-abortion mindset, it seems that many proponents of highly restrictive abortion regulation are responding to their personal, very strongly held, beliefs. While respectful of the beliefs of others, it seems inherently wrong that these often religiously based perspectives provide a basis for restriction of choice for all women. A second justification seems to be rooted in the notion that the woman is simply unable to make good personal decisions, thus requiring the intervention of legislative bodies. This notion that (mostly white, male) legislators should decide for the woman whether or not to terminate a pregnancy, is rooted in history rife with sexism, racism, misogyny, and a need to control women's bodies. Surely, it is time to grow beyond such nonsense.

My basis for support of reasonable abortion limitations rests with a third argument: At some point in the pregnancy, a ball of cells becomes a viable human being. That "point" will never be easily determined; at best it will be an uneasy compromise based upon medical science, with heavy emphasis given to the personal right of each woman to make decisions affecting her own body.

While generally proud to be a Kansan, I am ashamed that many in my State cheered when an abortion provider was murdered. Others support a politician who violates the privacy of women's medical records. The Kansas track record on this sensitive subject is not a positive reflection on our great state. If proponents of this constitutional amendment truly care about women and children, I suggest they focus on expansion of Medicaid and equitable funding of public education. Access to medical care and educational opportunity are effective methods for prevention of unintended pregnancy. Furthermore, a healthy and well educated populace is one best able to exercise their democratic rights.

Thank you for consideration of my thoughts.

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