

January 20, 2020

Written Testimony in Opposition of HCR 5019

Dear Chairs Barker and Wilborn and all the members of the House Federal and State Affairs and Senate Judiciary Committees:

I would like to share my story as related to HCR5019, the constitutional amendment banning all abortion options in Kansas.

I was born and raised in Olathe, graduating from Olathe South in 2012 and Kansas State University in May of 2016. In November 2016, I was diagnosed with Idiopathic Intracranial Hypertension (also known as Pseudotumor Cerebri), which means I have too much spinal fluid (cerebrospinal fluid or CSF) creating pressure to my brain. This condition can cause severe headaches, vomiting, dizziness, chronic fatigue, loss of hearing and loss of vision. My medical care team consists of a General Practitioner, an Ophthalmologist, a Neurologist and a Gynecologist, all licensed practitioners in Kansas.

I routinely take medication that lowers the amount of CSF my body produces. My doctors have made clear from the start of taking these medications that they can cause birth defects and that I need to be very careful not to get pregnant. If I were to have an unexpected pregnancy, it is very probable that the fetus would have severe birth defects and would likely not live to term. An unexpected pregnancy would also require the immediate cease of my medication which could result in my conditions worsening and create the risk of other conditions including stroke.

I got married in March of 2019. My husband (who has a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing) and I are very cognizant of the risk of getting pregnant. While we are very diligent in using birth control, we are aware that no method is 100% effective. If I were to get pregnant, I would have difficult decisions to make. Do I continue the pregnancy knowing the likelihood of fetal birth defects or do I continue the pregnancy at risk to my life? These are not abstract, hypothetical questions. This is a real-life possibility that I would face.

Ask yourself, what would you do if faced with this situation. What decision would your wife or daughter make if faced with risking their life for a non-viable pregnancy.

Whatever decision made, should be made by ME, with the help of my husband, my medical team and my faith. NOT by legislators. I implore you to vote no on HCR5019.

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