

Kansas House Committee on Federal and State Affairs

HCR 5003 – The Value Them Both Constitutional Amendment

January 15, 2021

Chairman Barker and Members of the Committee:

My name is Dr. Catherine Powers, and I am testifying in support of the Value Them Both Amendment.

I have been a physician for the past 37 years, specializing in Anesthesiology for 28 years and Hospice & Palliative Medicine for the past 9 years. The majority of my time as an anesthesiologist was at Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, Missouri and Kansas. In the field of hospice and palliative medicine, I was medical director of the Carousel Team at Kansas City Hospice and Palliative Care, which takes care of perinatal and pediatric palliative patients & their families. Currently I am a hospice medical director in the Kansas City metro area.

I agreed to testify for this very important amendment due to the inconsistencies and duplicity of medical and legal double standards during my entire career. The rules of informed consent for minors were always very stringent at Children's Mercy Hospital, requiring a parent or guardian to sign for procedures and surgeries, unless the adolescent was declared an "emancipated minor", which is defined as a young parent of a child, or married under 18 years of age. This practice assures legal consent from adults who are responsible for the holistic welfare of their child's life, including physical as well as psychological risks of various procedures. The implication of the Kansas Supreme Court decision to allow young female adolescents to consent to a procedure such as an abortion, without parental or guardian's consent, is not standard of care in any other area of healthcare. The future consequences to the young mother, who may not have parental support or knowledge, are potentially devastating to a young woman's physical, emotional and psychological health.

As far as my medical career in pediatric anesthesiology, I have been expected to resuscitate premature babies at birth, as well as during procedures and surgeries. Again, it baffles me about the duplicity of medical liability, when I have been expected to maintain and resuscitate life in any premature babies at Children's Mercy Hospital (usually >22 weeks gestation may be viable)... And yet the abortion industry is allowed to kill babies without any comparable liability. Currently, there are maternal-fetal surgeries being performed at Children's Mercy Hospital for congenital abnormalities. Not only is the mother anesthetized for this intrauterine operation, but the fetus is given pain medication to relieve the hypersensitive pain response that would be detrimental to the baby's welfare. Research has shown that babies >18 weeks gestation have developed pain pathways. This especially concerns me when I hear about dismemberment procedures during abortion. These babies feel pain, and are silently crying out as they die.

During my medical career, both in obstetrical anesthesia as well as perinatal palliative care, I have experienced many women with untimely pregnancies, unexpected congenital malformations, as well as genetic syndromes that would cause their babies to not survive the entire pregnancy or live for only a few hours or weeks after birth. Several of the babies with life-

limiting or terminal diagnoses were born to brave and loving mothers, who were able to bond with their babies for a short but significant time, for long-lasting memories of their relationship as mother & baby. Many of the healthy babies carried to term by brave and loving mothers have been offered up for adoption, a beautiful alternative and a true self-sacrifice, in order to give their baby potentially a better life, with parents who want to raise a child in their home.

I thank you for allowing me to testify in support of the VTB (Value Them Both) Amendment, for the protection of both women & babies, and ask you all to pass this amendment out of your committees favorably. I am open for questions if there are any.