

Testimony in Support of HB 8 “Labor and Employment – Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program – Establishment (Time to Care Act of 2022)”

House Economic Matters Committee

February 15, 2022

TO: Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and members of the Economic Matters Committee
FROM: K. Morris

It’s Time for the Time to Care Act. In 2009 I heard a radio ad about a procedure called uterine fibroid embolization (UFE). The ad said that I should call the number to "see whether you are a candidate". I called and I expressed all of my concerns to the doctor, including the ability to conceive in the future. He gave me what I now know to be intentionally evasive, vague answers. But I trusted him because he is a doctor and so I had the procedure. This procedure was a more attractive option for me because it was being marketed as non-surgical and minimally invasive so that I could return to work within a few days. The alternative procedure would require me to be out of work for 6-8 weeks, which I could not afford to do as a single mom.

Two weeks after having the UFE procedure done, I found out that it is experimental and not recommended for women of child-bearing age because of the risk of infertility. I was 32-years-old at the time. Last year I went to a fertility specialist to see whether I can try to conceive because I was now aware that the UFE had compromised my fertility. In April 2021, a fertility doctor told me that after a woman has had a UFE procedure her chances of conceiving are reduced by 95%. Meaning, a woman who has had a UFE procedure only has a 5% chance of having a successful pregnancy. Despite my efforts to get all the information I could, I was used as an experiment and essentially sterilized.

The procedure was done in 2009. However, I continue to discover new information that horrifies me even more. Recently, at a doctor's appointment I was told there might be a calcified fetus still in my womb. If so, he died as a result of the UFE procedure treating him like a fibroid and depriving him of blood and oxygen until he suffocated. I continue to suffer from PTSD because of this. Every night I go to sleep thinking about how I was violated. I remain traumatized by the experience. Because of the laws in Maryland I would have to sue within 3 years. However, infertility is not an injury that can always be discovered within 3 years. So this doctor got away with murder, specifically feticide, and with robbing me of my fertility. After all that, I still have to have the same major surgery that I was trying to avoid in 2009.

We need the Time to Care Act in place to protect workers, in my case women and single mothers, from being seen as targets for alternative and sometimes experimental procedures that have a negative impact on long-term health. Had a law like the Time to Care Act that protected my income been in place in 2009, I never would have even considered a UFE procedure. Then I would be a mother of two and my unborn child would not have suffered. I still need the Time to Care Act so I can have surgery to attempt to restore my health. And families need the Time to Care Act to protect their family’s income and allow them the freedom to choose medical procedures without being influenced by lost income and the need to rush back to work. I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB 8.