

Chair Delores Kelley Maryland Senate Finance Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen St  
Annapolis, MD 21401

28 March 2020

HB1171 - Declaration of Rights - Right to Reproductive Liberty  
**Opposed**

Dear Honorable Chair Kelley:

I am writing in opposition of House Bill 1171, which seeks to add the right to an abortion to the Maryland state constitution.

In 1985 when I was 19 years old, I chose to abort my unborn child. I thought that after terminating my pregnancy my life would go back to normal. It didn't. Psychologically, choosing to abort my unborn child impacted my life *forever*.

During my appointment with Planned Parenthood, they asked me if I was 100% sure that I wanted to abort my child. I said I was not. The intake nurse told me that I needed to decide because their waiting room was full and if I didn't decide right now it would impact their schedule for the day. I felt pressure from PP and I felt pressure from my boyfriend (the baby's father). I went through with it.

Months later I reflected that I wasn't myself. I didn't "get over it" like I thought I would. I used to be a happy person. Now I was depressed, and faking my happiness so others wouldn't see a change in me. I began suffering from decreased self-esteem, guilt, shame, loneliness, and sleep issues/nightmares that went on for years. After breaking up with that boyfriend, I found myself distrusting men. I also no longer trusted my closest girlfriends who told me to do it. I began displaying abnormal eating behaviors and would binge eat because it made me feel good. When I was 24 I sought counseling with a licensed psychologist. She confirmed that my bouts of depression, binge eating, sleep issues were a dominant psychological consequence of my decision to choose abortion.

As time passed, I worried about not being able to conceive or deliver a child in the future. This fear eventually became reality. I had infertility challenges. When I did finally conceive, I conceived twins, but lost one at 18 weeks. A few years after the birth of my only son, I went through infertility treatments in my attempt to conceive a second child. I miscarried again due to a blighted ovum. When I needed a procedure later to correct these challenges, the OB/GYN confirmed abortion likely a contributing factor leading to a host of severe reproductive complications including a partial hysterectomy.

To this day, 37 years later, I dream of the child that I will never meet. Every December I think about him/her turning another year older. I imagine by now they would have been married and I would be a grandmother. I imagine he/she would be making a positive impact in our society.

Eventually I sought Christian counseling to process these experiences and now volunteer to support unwed pregnant teens. I have found peace through my relationship with Jesus. However, my choice had a

profound impact on me that has lasted decades. If I could go back I wish there had been a resource for me to have heard the pros and cons of choosing to end my child's life. I only received the resource through Planned Parenthood which was "come pay us money and we will erase your mistake". They didn't tell me how the consequence of my choice would last for the rest of my life. I desired truth. I desired love.

I plead with Maryland Legislators, to consider my experience and that these physiological and psychological health effects do occur. I now believe my child and my health was worth protecting. I regret my decision.

I believe better support for pregnant moms and informed consent are important issues not addressed by HB 1171 and this amendment would make it hard to add these measures seen as "restrictions" This is unacceptable.

Thank you for considering how to better serve women in their reproductive years in Maryland.

Sincerely,  
Cheryl T Winterton  
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