

FROM THE DESK OF

LESLIE D. MARK

January 16, 2020

Sen. Rick Wilborn, *Chair, Judiciary Committee*

Sen. Vic Miller, *Ranking Member, Judiciary Committee*

Sen. Eric Rucker, *Vice Chair, Judiciary Committee*

Senators Molly Baumgardner, Elaine Bowers, David Haley, Randall Hardy, Julia Lynn,  
Mike Petersen, Dennis Pyle, Mike Thompson, *Members of the Judiciary Committee*

**RE: SCR 1613**

Dear Mr. Chair, Vice Chair, Ranking Member and Members,

I write with urgency – distressed that my government would so surreptitiously undertake a massive alteration to our constitutional rights with such intemperate haste. I wonder why there is little desire to consider, with curiosity and openness, the spectrum that Kansans could illuminate for you about what is best for our future as a state and as a people?

Throughout history, Jewish law has permitted abortion in a variety of circumstances. The Babylonian Talmud states that what is in a mother's uterus for the first 40 days has a legal status of "mere water." Also in the Babylonian Talmud and in Maimonides' Mishnah Torah *Laws of Murderer and the Preservation of Life 1:9*, a late abortion is permitted if a woman's life is in danger. While there are other examples, I am not a biblical scholar; as a Jew, though, I take comfort that centuries of debate and communities full of families and women have dealt with these issues and we have their example to learn from, mindful we are not the first to wrestle with this.

Likewise, Kansas has decades of history that respected the autonomy of women and accorded them suffrage. The resolve to terminate a pregnancy might be arrived at easily, made early and without fraught wrangling, but many women receive difficult or challenging late diagnoses of inviolability. SCR 1613 would not allow any discernment between a woman's health need or fetal abnormality – indeed it wouldn't tolerate counseling or conversation in any case. Without personal autonomy, which is at the very heart of human dignity, we cannot exercise self-determination or control our destinies. Putting politics above women's health is unconscionable and goes against our proud history.

Sincerely yours,



Leslie D. Mark