

To the House Federal and State Affairs and the Senate Judiciary Committees
Testimony in Opposition of HCR 5019
Selina Sandoval, MD

Thank you for allowing me to present testimony. My name is Dr. Selina Sandoval and I am an Obstetrician and Gynecologist (Ob/Gyn), serving the women and families of Kansas, and I have experience in caring for women who obtain abortions.

I would like to start today by emphasizing that abortion care is a necessary component of woman's health care. As a women's health specialist, I can confirm to you that the women of Kansas obtain abortions for many reasons. These reasons could include contraception failure, the risks pregnancy can induce on their health, barrier to obtaining contraception and healthcare, and many others. When counselling my patients, I provide them with information regarding all of their options. This includes continuing their pregnancy to parent their child, adoption, and abortion. It is important during this conversation to avoid offering any bias and to ensure that the patient is making their own decision, free from coercion from others. My patients know that no matter what they choose, I will support them in their decision. Some women come to me with their mind made up, but for others it may take more time. Regardless, this is always a serious decision and women do not make it lightly.

I would like to tell you the story of a patient of mine, we can call her Sarah. I took care of Sarah very recently. Sarah presented to the hospital with an unrelenting headache. It was discovered that her blood pressure was severely elevated, putting her at risk for stroke and death. Sarah knew she was pregnant. An ultrasound confirmed a twin pregnancy. One of her twins was a normally formed viable pregnancy. The second pregnancy however was abnormal and released dangerously high levels of pregnancy hormones. This condition can cause heart failure, cancer and if untreated, death.

Sarah was transferred to the medical ICU, where multiple medical specialists were involved in her care. It was agreed by these specialists that an abortion was the safest course of action for Sarah. This was difficult for Sarah, as this was a highly desired pregnancy, and she feared judgement from others. She was forced to make the impossible choice between her life and her baby's life. This was a personal and private medical decision. With the support of her husband, her chaplain, and her medical team, Sarah made the decision to proceed with her abortion. Sarah left the hospital on the road to recovery and still one day hopes to have a family of her own.

Thankfully, it was legal for Sarah to obtain her abortion. However, legislation such as HCR 5019 directly threatens this right. Sarah and all of the physicians caring for her knew what was best for her health care. HCR 5019 would make it possible for the state of Kansas to put even more restrictions on a woman's access to abortion care with no regard to the health and safety of Kansas women and families.

The Kansas state Supreme Court agrees that the state constitution includes the right to autonomy. Women have the right to choose what is best for their families, their bodies and their future. They have the right to decide what happens to their own body.

Approximately 1 in 4 American women will have an abortion in their lifetime. We know that abortion does not end by making it illegal, it simply becomes less safe. Women will take their abortion care into their own hands. Generations of OB/GYN's before me can testify to their memories of septic abortion wards, where women who self-induced their abortions by a variety of means were housed as they fought for their lives.

If legislation such as HCR 5019 passes, women of Kansas will die. My patients will die, and I cannot in good conscious stand by without coming to fight for their rights, which according to the constitution, include LIFE, liberty and pursuit of happiness.

As a physician I strongly oppose HCR 5019. I stand with my patients and their right to obtain safe and legal abortions in the state of Kansas.

Thank you,
Selina Sandoval MD