

Kansas House Federal and State Affairs Committee

9:00 AM, Room 346 –S

Testimony in Opposition to HCR 5003

Christie Burkhart

Friday, January 15, 2021

Dear Chairman Barker, Vice-Chairwoman Arnberger and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony and I urge you to not amend our state's constitution. I hope from my story you will understand that taking away health care options for women is not pro-life at all.

I was 16 years old and seeing a much older person. On the night I got pregnant, I asked him to wear a condom and saw him put it on. However, he must have decided to take it off. Afterwards I saw the unused condom on the floor by the bed. I was completely scared and mortified. I left his house and went home.

When I missed my period, I was so scared. However, I have the world's greatest mom. I told her and she purchased a pregnancy test for me. I took the test the very next morning and I remember seeing the positive results and thinking how badly I had messed up.

My mom and I talked about my options. She allowed me to weigh my options and write out my feelings. When I made my decision to have an abortion, she was the one who called Dr. Tiller's office to make my appointment with me.

The day of my appointment, my mom and I traveled almost an hour to Wichita to the clinic. I remember feeling scared, but also felt that this was the absolute best decision for me at that time in my life. I was a very active teenager who participated in many sports and every school and community organization that I was able to.

After the appointment the main thing I remember feeling was a deep sense of relief. I knew at age 16, I wouldn't have been a great mom like my own. I wouldn't have been able to care for a child all alone. I wouldn't have been able to provide a good life for a child.

Now as a happily married woman, I have no regrets about my decision. I knew that this was the absolute right decision for me and for the life ahead of me. I would not have been afforded the opportunity to finish high school nor attend college.

After disclosing my story to a few close friends, three of them asked for my assistance in helping them come to receive an abortion from Dr. Tiller. I was able to discuss this with my supportive mom and she allowed me to help my friends make the right decision for them as well.

All of this happened during the Summer of Mercy, 1991. I remember being so very nervous about the anti-choice protestors that were outside Dr. Tiller's clinics. I remember one specific occasion that the clinic support personnel had to assist me in obtaining access to the parking lot. I

remember them yelling and screaming at me. Standing in front of my car. Knocking on my car windows. Trying to intimidate me to not proceed into the parking lot.

I tell my story now as abortion is normal. Every person should be afforded the opportunity to make the choice that is right for them. Abortion is health care and should be a decision between a person and their health care provider. Please do not take this drastic route. Please do not interfere in a woman's ability to make her own medical decisions throughout her pregnancy.