

Senator Carney and Representative Moonen, Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Rebekah Carmichael, and I am a resident of Saint Albans. I am testifying in opposition to LD 1619.

I am the mother of two beautiful children. I was advised to get an abortion when I was pregnant with my daughter, because I was told that she would have no brain function. Today, she is a happy, healthy 16-month-old who speaks hundreds of words, plays and laughs and sings, and is developmentally just like any other child. I am so glad that I did not end her dynamic and amazing life.

As I ponder the suggestion that we should expand abortion access in our state, I have been considering some of the other things that have happened in the history of our country. The things in the forefront of my mind right now are the crimes committed against the American Indians in the name of establishing a civilized society, and the crimes committed against Black people in the name of legal slavery. Many of the tremendous problems our society is trying to remedy right now are the repercussions we face because of our government sanctioning such atrocities.

Even after we as a society realized how wrong it was to treat Black people and American Indians as less than human, we still continued to make some terrible mistakes. The American Academy of Pediatrics waited until 1987 to recognize the ability of infants to feel pain, and to declare the importance of surgeons using anesthetics for infants. This may shock us, and yet today, we are considering a bill which subtly suggests that full term babies cannot feel pain prior to being born. I would like to ask everyone present to consider the fact that unborn babies with fully developed nerves feel the exact same levels of pain as the newborn babies in 1986 who were undergoing surgeries with no anesthesia.

Someday down the road, our children are going to finally accept all of the scientific and medical studies regarding the development of unborn babies, and they are going to be mourning the inhumane acts that we justified as legal. They will be desperately trying to fix these mistakes, just as we are now attempting to fix the mistakes of our past. What a greater burden we will place upon future generations by legalizing an even worse situation for our posterity to someday try to remedy.

May we each have the courage and integrity to take a stand and to help create an enlightened and truly civilized society.

Rebekah Carmichael  
St. Albans  
LD 1619

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