

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Rachel Carll and I am a resident of New Gloucester. I am here to testify in opposition to LD 1619.

I am the mother of four adult children. I am also the mother of an infant daughter who died way too soon. My husband and I found out halfway through our pregnancy that our little child had something wrong with her brain. We were informed she may not make it to birth and the most heartbreaking news was that even if she made it through the difficult birth there was a one hundred percent chance she would not survive long after. We were given the "choice" to end the pregnancy.

At this time my heart was breaking, and my head was spinning with how to take this news all in. It didn't take us any time to let the doctor know we would not terminate our little child. I would take whatever time I had with her to be her loving mom, no matter how little or how long that time was. For the next few months I'd sing to her, tenderly touch her over my belly, and let her know how much I loved her. I also knew the reality of the situation. I did not prepare a room or buy her clothes other than the ones she would be buried in. We also prepared her funeral.

The day came when she, Talitha, arrived. It was a difficult day, and a beautiful day. It was the day our child would be born... It was also the day when we would have to let her go... The most beautiful little girl was given to us. A gift. She had beautiful lips, my ears, and the most tender little fingers. We got to sing to her, kiss her over and over again, and tell her how much we loved her. My husband and I passed her back and forth for about an hour and twenty minutes when she quietly passed in my husband's loving arms. Way too short. I wanted... I needed... more time... but this was the time we were given.

Her life was and still is so very precious. Precious to both my husband and I, as well as to her siblings and other family members. We were given a precious, valuable gift. **Not all that is given to us in this crazy life is easy.** It is so important to value ALL the children, even the ones that come at **hard times, in difficult circumstances or when they don't meet your original hopes or expectations.**

My husband was the child of a fifteen-year-old mother and seventeen-year-old father. She was fourteen when they refused to abort him, against the recommendations of many. Because his parents preserved his life, my husband exists today and so do my children and grandchildren.

Please, I ask you to hear me. Hear us all. Please, please **do not** pass such a **merciless bill**. For the lives of these valuable, innocent children. Please vote ought not to pass.