

Judy Schlueter, LPC, MAPC, RN
Proponent
Senate Bill 28
Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee
December 12, 2017

Good Morning, Chairman Coley, Vice Chair Uecker, Ranking Member Schaivoni and members of the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf these past 42 years of service to countless women, men and babies as R.N., Lamaze childbirth educator, birth coach, post partum support and mentor.

As a **Professional Clinical Counselor duly licensed in the State of Ohio**, I have practiced in **the Mental Health discipline for over 20 years specializing in crisis pregnancy and post abortion mental and emotional health issues**. A graduate of Ashland University with MAPC and advanced accompanying credits from the Pontifical College Josephinum have practiced Professional Counseling from 1993-to present during which time founded and continue to direct Bethesda Healing Ministry, a 24X7 Post Abortion Healing Program which uses as its program of choice the healing manual authored in 2003 entitled '*an experience of hope*'. This is the program of choice for Project Rachel/ Washington, D.C.; Kisumu, Kenya and throughout the Columbus Ohio Catholic Diocese.

With a skilled and maturely healed team, chaplains and professionals we record over 3000 contact hours with women wounded by abortion each year.

In 1977 while serving as a mentor and support for women in crisis pregnancy, I was often invited to be an adult team member on a number of high school/college student weekend retreats. It was not unusual to be awakened in the middle of the night by the sobbing sounds of young women offering through tears, regret and confusion stories of a recent abortion. These and other moment's of poignant sharing and counseling countless woman over the years and subsequent findings/research led me to realize that all women experience some aftermath of abortion.

And many do live daily with evidence of unresolved anger, shame and defensiveness. This was never so clear as the years when, as a Wisconsin resident, I was appointed by then-Governor Anthony Earl of Wisconsin to serve on a State Board for Adolescent Teen Pregnancy and it became most evident there is something more to abortion than crisis pregnancy.

I come to you today having held in my heart and my life women of all ages who deeply regret the decision to abort their unborn children. For over 40 years I have offered personal counsel and programs of healing for women wounded by abortion. All such programs have been without charge to those who come or payment to those of us who serve on ministry teams. We have heard repeated over these many years the words "...something inside is broken since my abortion."

Unknown to many is that within each woman by design of our Creator God is a sacred space in which a woman might conceive, carry, birth and nurture human life. Indeed each mother continues to carry, long past pregnancy, the cells and DNA of her unborn child. When abortion destroys that maternal design it leaves broken a piece of each mother who longs for closure. (see Vicky Thorn, "Biology of the Body")

The recent exposure of the horror of abuse of the bodies of aborted children by Planned Parenthood and the disposal of such remains even in the State of Ohio demands of our society a response to mothers who made a painful decision years ago only to now be retraumatized by the possibility that perhaps her baby became a product for profit or discarded in a dumpster.

In the advocacy of us all for 'what is right' might we find a common meeting of care for women and babies to secure a mother's consent to bring closure to the haunting question now being asked within her about the ultimate destiny of her abortion - her baby. Together might we provide a humane final closure through burial or cremation for the remains of her aborted baby? Even in the most emotionally painful moments prior to abortion, might we provide the opportunity for her to make the determination of a final earthly resting place for the child of her womb?

I urge you to support Senate Bill 28, for the respect and dignity of women and their unborn babies in our state. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak today, and I would be happy to take any questions you may have at this time.