

House Health Committee
SB 23 Opponent Testimony
March 26, 2019

Chairman Merrin, Ranking Member Boyd and members of the House Health Committee, my name is Deb Lichtenberger. I am here to testify against Senate Bill 23. I am a wife, mother of three children, and the full-time caregiver for my elderly disabled mother. I am also a licensed physician. I have worn a lot of hats over the years. I would prefer to be home today, but I cannot stand by as legislatures try to take away my rights and the rights of other women.

The premise for Senate Bill 23 is disingenuous, at best. According to Senator Roegner, fetal viability outside the uterus is changing so swiftly that we need a new standard – a detectable fetal heartbeat, which can be detected as early as 6 weeks. A six-week-old fetus is less than an inch in length. It would be a very distant future when that fetus could survive outside of a uterus.

Women have many reasons for seeking an abortion and I respect every woman's right to decide what is best for her. I believe that women do not approach this decision lightly and are making a decision that only they should make. I am glad that the option of abortion was open to me when I was a poor college student. I had my three children when I was married, financially stable and ready to start a family.

My wish for all children is that they grow up in a happy, loving home. That they are here because they are wanted and cherished. That they have financial security.

Too often, those that oppose abortion only care that the baby is born.

They stop caring when there is a single mom who needs a job that pays a living wage, not the three-part time minimum wage jobs she has to take because no one wants to give her a 40-hour work week with benefits like health care.

They stop caring when that mom needs affordable child care so her children will be safe while she goes to her crummy jobs.

They stop caring when that mom wants to go to college to improve her job choices.

And they stop caring when they cut health care benefits to poor children.

They will say this mom is a free loader and is trying to steal taxpayer's money, but they put her in this untenable situation.

This is not acceptable and it is certainly not prolife.

My wish is that we support women.

By providing accurate sex education and making contraceptives affordable and easily attainable, we can help women have children when they want to have them. Just like me.

We women deserve better than this punitive bill and I urge all of you to put yourself in the shoes of someone with an unintended pregnancy.

We deserve better from you.