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Proponent Testimony on Senate Bill 23
House Health Committee
Tuesday, March 19, 2019

Chairman Merrin, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Boyd, and members of the committee.

Thank you for allowing me to speak to you today on behalf of Senate Bill 23. My name is Dr. Joel Goodnough.

I am a retired Ob Gyn. During my career I delivered thousands of babies. I also did some abortions. But ultimately I transitioned from a pro choice stance to a pro life stance for one simple reason. I asked and answered a question.

Imagine you are sitting in your family room watching tv and your daughter, who is playing in the next room, suddenly asks: "Daddy, can I kill it?" What is your response? Most likely you will want to know what it is that she wants to kill. Is it a spider, the family pet, her baby brother? What is it?

It makes a difference doesn't it? It's also true for the unborn. Is the unborn fully human and a part of the human family? Or is she something less than human? If she is something less than human, if abortion is morally equivalent to an appendectomy, we should be able to do whatever we want with her. We just have to make it safe. But if the unborn is fully human she should have the same constitutional protection that the born have.

It is clear from science that from the time of fertilization there exists a unique human being who has the capacity, if not yet the ability, to walk, talk, go to school, fall in love, get married, have children, and grow old. Wired into her DNA is this capacity to do all these things if she is simply left alone.

But an entire class of individuals is not left alone. The unborn have been deprived of the most basic civil right, the right not to be killed. As a result almost 60 million unborn have been killed since Roe v Wade. If Roe is overturned the issue of abortion will simply go back to the states to decide. As we have seen in New York, democrat controlled state legislatures will codify the ability to get an abortion. Until we have a Federal Constitutional Amendment that eliminates abortion, the Natural right to life will continue to be denied to the most vulnerable.

I have hopes that some future generation will pass the amendment that finally eliminates abortion. President Abraham Lincoln once said that "With public sentiment nothing can fail. Without it, nothing can succeed". It took the publication of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and a civil war to finally eliminate slavery. It will take a changing of hearts and minds and a cultural civil war to eliminate abortion. In the meantime, bills at the state level such as the Heartbeat Bill can help restore basic civil rights to at least some of the unborn. The Heartbeat Bill identifies those who need to be protected. Approximately 15% of all clinically recognized pregnancies end in miscarriage. But once a heartbeat is seen on ultrasound the miscarriage rate drops to just 3%. When I was in medical practice we often described a pregnancy with a heartbeat as viable. It wasn't a legal term for us. It was a medical term that signaled relief because those individuals who had a heartbeat had survived the natural pregnancy loss and would most likely do well. If just left alone.

It was noted by many that the demographics of those who attended the National March for Life this year were different from previous years. There were lots of young women there. They were

there because they had seen the ultrasounds during their pregnancies. Their hearts and minds had been affected. What is it? The question for them had been answered.

On behalf of an entire class of unborn individuals who have been deprived of the most basic right, the right not to be killed, I ask that you vote in favor of Senate Bill 23.

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