

House Health Committee
SB 23 Opponent Testimony
March 26, 2019

At almost the same time I found out I was pregnant, I also found out I had a serious medical issue that was potentially cancerous. Treating this problem might have endangered my pregnancy so I proceeded forward without treatment, hoping for a miracle.

Then, at my 20 week ultrasound, we found out one fetus was dead and the other was severely developmentally compromised because of Twin to Twin Transfusion Syndrome. She did have a heartbeat but was missing most of her brain. The chances of that fetus making it to term were very small and if she was born at 36 weeks she would not be able to breathe on her own but would immediately suffocate.

Our doctor recommended that I have an abortion because carrying a dead fetus for any length of time is very dangerous to the mother, the other fetus was not viable and, by terminating the pregnancy, I could get the medical care I needed to potentially save my life. But the state of Missouri, where we were living at the time, did not allow abortions after 20 weeks. Our doctor called a clinic in Kansas that could do the procedure. We were given secret code words to use upon our arrival and told to be prepared to be verbally accosted when entering and exiting the clinic over the 3 day procedure. The clinic was a 7 hour drive from our home and our doctor told us that if I experienced any issues to go to the nearest emergency since carrying a dead fetus can result in life threatening issues. My husband and I were grieving the loss of our daughters while also being absolutely terrified for my life.

In the end we did get a miracle, just not the one we had imagined. One day before we were to leave for Kansas, I went into labor. I delivered our wanted baby girls with my doctor in our local hospital. I consider it a blessing not to have had to make that harrowing trip to Kansas and to not have people scream hate at us as we mourned the death of our babies. We named our daughters and had a service for them. I went on to have the medical treatment I needed.

This experience opened our eyes to pregnancy scenarios we could never have imagined. I cannot understand why the politicians in the state of Missouri felt that an unviable fetus' time in my womb was more valuable than my life. A heartbeat does not mean a pregnancy is viable. The idea that an abortion will be allowed if the life of the mother is in jeopardy is a fallacy. My medical issue was a slow killer and so did not count as my life being in immediate danger and neither did carrying a dead fetus. Late term abortions are rare and many are performed on women who are facing unimaginable grief.

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