

Dear Committee and Chair of the Committee,

I am writing to you regarding my opposition to SB-23. I apologize I could not be present to speak in front of you. Here is my story as a male partner to my wife and a devoted father of 4 children, ages 23, 21, 10 and 5.

In the fall of 2017, at about 18 weeks gestation, our family heard the devastating news that our very loved and wanted son, Mars, had Trisomy 13 - a fatal fetal anomaly that affected 98% of his cells. He had a very small chance of making it to birth. If he had made it through childbirth, he would have been born with part of his brain pressing out of his cranium, abnormally developed kidneys and heart, clubbed feet and extra toes and fingers and multiple cranio-facial abnormalities - and these were only the things we knew about. With the degree that his cells were affected he'd probably not be able to eat and would die within 7 days of birth, if he made it through birth.

Can you imagine the impact this phone call had on us? Here's what ran through our heads: How will we walk our other children through this? How will we be able to watch our son die painfully? What will the emotional impact on my kids to see their youngest sibling who could possibly be born without some of his skin and many other physical deformities? How can we stop his pain? How will my wife and I handle our profound sadness as she carries this child through the next 4 months of gestation as strangers ask her the normal questions you ask an expecting mom - are you ready? is the nursery decorated? are your children excited? How will she try to avoid answering them without lying so as not to make their innocent questions seem so awful?

We were just waiting for our child to die. Likely, my wife would not have the capacity to care for all 3 of my children (not to mention the other two who, although they are adults, would undoubtedly be affected by this as much as we are) if we let this happen naturally. How will we watch this bump grow daily as my wife waits for her body to possibly miscarry at any time - sending our lives into a complete panic and tailspin? How frightening would it be for our younger children?

My wife and I realized that the last thing we could do for our son, as his mother and father - and the only people that could prevent his pain and protect him and our other children from prolonged suffering, was to seek abortion care. We didn't take this decision lightly, but did know that it was the only thing that was right for us.

After talking in depth with our geneticist at the hospital and asking tons of questions about our options we decided to terminate the pregnancy, with the support of our geneticist and doctors.

Being in control of her situation and her medical choices meant everything to my wife and I. It allowed us to continue caring for our other children and their needs to the best of our ability because we could plan our lives and begin our healing together.

Mars was due in February, 2018. He would be a year old today. If abortion were not an choice my life would be very different right now. We'd be deep in mourning after watching our child wither away - probably not able to even hold and comfort him. We'd be deep in financial debt, paying for all of the medical care he required - not to mention a burial or cremation. My other children would be struggling to recover from the emotional distress. And perhaps we would be struggling to fulfill their needs. Instead, my wife has taken charge of her life. We are both recovering in our own way together - my wife's body is healthy and happy. There is

peace in her heart because she was able to be his mom for the last moments of his life on her own terms.

We made this decision together. I fully supported my partner when she decided to seek abortion care because it was the right thing to do for her and our son, Mars.

If you vote SB-23 into law, the option for others that experience what we did would not be available. I empower all of you to strike this down and give each and every woman, wife, partner the right to make their own decision based upon what they and their partner feels is best for each of their own unique situation.

Thank you for listening to my personal testimony as a partner to my wife.

Sincerely,

David W. E. Brenneis