

My name is Jessica Roach and I am submitting testimony as a concerned citizen, woman, and public healthcare professional. I believe it is my duty and right to stand truly for life, meaning the right to live a full, unencumbered one steeped in psychological, spiritual, socioeconomic stability as basic human rights. As a health professional, I believe in the ethics of informed consent, as well as autonomy in making decisions, based on the self-evaluation of one's own capacity. HB 214 for me, is the anti-thesis of this.

As a former nurse, I could speak to the various reasons one may choose to termination a pregnancy in which the probability of giving birth to a child with Down's syndrome is high. From concerns of congenital heart defects, to impaired immunity which increases risk of infection, or a host of other possibilities, from a clinical perspective that informs my opinion, all options should be allowed and honored.

Through my lens as a reproductive justice advocate and doula, who values the ability to possess quality of life, it is necessary to center the most important of conversations, which are ours. The right to autonomy and not be governed by an outside entity, to be valid and trusted to make sound and informed decisions, and above all else, make the necessary and difficult decisions as to when, where, how, and if we choose to carry a pregnancy. This debate for me, is not one of a pro- life, or pro- choice, strict lens viewed and defined by those who do not look like me or live my life experience, this is about the right to have my final word and say as final.

I, therefore, oppose HB 214, on the premise that if we are truly to have the ability to be seen in a light of value, that if my life does and will continue to matter, we maintain the few reproductive rights that we have and be the centered voice of the decision making process. As difficult as it seems to be for this legislative body to understand, similar to the discussion of whether or not you want me in your home without invitation, you must valid my body the same. To continue to operate in this vein of invasion is assault, at the very least, oppression as a definite, and violating at its core. If what this assembly portrays as the stand for a right to life, it must also consider the stand for actual living breathing entities, those that have additional family members and self to care for, that require our health, well-being, and presence in order to accomplish the daily tasks at hand. The only person that is capable of understanding what our true capacity to do so in, are those of us living it, not those looking through the window deciding if what they see inside is worth them breaking into to get.

My demand and plea is to vote no to HB 214 and to allow for us to be trusted to make our own decisions regarding our bodies, our stories, and our choices.