**Testimony of Rachelle L. Heidlebaugh – Proponent of HB 258 – Sen. Health Comm. 12/11/18**

Mr. Chairman,

I represent millions of women and their families who have suffered from the devastating, horrific and tragic effects from abortion!   There are millions of Mothers in this nation mourning for their babies, whose hearts are still broken, because their arms are empty.  I speak for those as one voice, and what we want to say is that we wish we did not have “**A Choice**”!

My personal story starts twenty-one years ago, when I was a victim of a drug rape!  I woke up in shock, confused in a fog, barely able to walk.   As a divorced, single mother struggling alone, I had 30 minutes to arrive at work to keep my job, I did not go to a hospital for treatment.  I went to work.

Two weeks later I found myself in a “Crisis Pregnancy”.  I should have gone to God in the situation, instead I called a girlfriend. Terrified of more pressures and difficulties raising another child alone, I was too willing to be convinced. Too certain I could keep ‘The Secret.’ Too easily tempted to buy into the lie… But I couldn’t begin to comprehend the lifelong impact and potential consequences of the choice I would make next. I remember thinking ‘it must be okay’, since the law permits it. Laws are supposed to protect us, right? The law did not protect my baby or me.

I had my first abortion.  In those days, I didn’t know the difference between an ‘Abortion Clinic’ and a ‘Crisis Pregnancy Center,” but how I wish I had! I remember thinking how much I loved my beautiful eleven-year-old daughter Heather. I would, in fact, DIE for her. And deep inside, I knew that this baby deserved that from me as well, that it wasn’t fair for the BABY to DIE for me. But, my fear, anxiety and denial overwhelmed me. So I did the deed quickly, before I had to admit to myself that it had really become a baby.

My thinking was twisted because I believed some very big lies. “It’s legal.” “It can’t be murder.” I have a CHOICE.” It’s Birth Control.” It’s a blob of tissue, not a baby.” “It won’t hurt (physically or emotionally).” “Just do this and it will soon be over; it will go away.” And thus, begins the post-abortive nightmare – for me and every other empty mother suffering in silence, It is not over, and it didn’t go away, and now the heartache and pain of my consequences never will. We learn from experience, abortion is evil and barbaric, I KNOW.

***THE Truth Is***, …the moment a woman knows she is pregnant, she also knows in HER heart that there is LIFE inside of her, a BABY, with his or her own heart.  Had I gone to a Crisis Pregnancy Center, taken time to breathe, to work through the shock and trauma, heard supportive encouraging voices, I believe there would have been a different outcome.  I would have avoided the last twenty-one years of my painful ‘Hell’ that has bled onto my daughter and family.  Instead of delivering a beautiful BABY, I chose to kill mine. I have not paid a legal price, but the cost has been great.

So, do I wish today that I had heard my BABY’S heartbeat? Yes . . . I am working so hard for the passage of this bill because I DO wish so! My abortion trauma (which actually doesn’t compare to my baby’s trauma as I had him killed) far exceeds the bad memories from the rape experience. Had I heard the heartbeat and kept my BABY, I have ***no doubt*** the natural, beautiful joy of a Mother’s love for her BABY, would have helped me to heal from the rape; instead, I’ll never heal from murdering my baby.  Would you? A violent act of rape was done to me, in return I did a more violent act and murdered my very own child……Try to conceive this reality and what pain and torment this causes women who have taken their child’s life.

 After my first “Choice” it was as if the gates of “HELL” opened up on me and Evil surrounded me. I was depressed, and seeking anything to deaden my pain. I wanted to die.  Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is a serious condition resulting from a single traumatic experience or prolonged stress. The signs and symptoms are physical pain, nightmares and flashbacks, depression, anxiety, withdrawal, avoidance, repression, emotional numbing, hyper-arousal, irritability, guilt and shame, all with increased suicidal risk. As you can see there is nothing positive that comes from the after effects of abortion. The abortion effect is dead baby and a spiritually, emotionally, physically distraught Mother. Less than one year later I got pregnant again…..feeling no self-value and unworthy to be a Mother, I had a second abortion. Yes, I killed my second baby.

Little girls do NOT grow up hoping to have an abortion. We grow up playing with dolls and wanting to be Mommies!!   Abortion is not a normal daily thought, until a woman is thrown into an unplanned “Crisis Pregnancy”.   Do any of us make the wisest decisions in the middle of a Crisis? Typically, the worst decisions are made under pressure.  Let me ask you, would we hand a gun to a suicidal person and say here “Chose Life or Death?” Absolutely not, that would be cruel. So, why do we allow a woman to make the choice to murder her baby in the middle of a crisis, when she is not thinking properly? To allow a Mother to murder her baby in a crisis pregnancy, is extremely cruel.

Millions of post abortive women have their own horrific stories and experiences of what a past abortion has done to their lives ***if they can even talk about it***.  Typically, we don’t talk about it, but we remain in our silent, shame, guilt, isolation and self-condemnation. Until there is healing in Jesus Christ, we remain captive in our self-made prisons. Despite the fact that many women feel forced by boyfriends or parents, we know that we laid on the table and we let it happen! I cannot express in words the devastation this created in my life – and in the lives of millions of others who have bought the lie.

I know had I hear my baby’s heartbeat, I would have been woken to the truth. I would have chosen life and love and have my two children right now, rather to continue to morn my choice and their death.

I humbly ask the committee to pass the Heartbeat bill to protect women from broken hearts, and more importantly, their babies from hearts that are ripped apart?

Millions of women wish they could have their children BACK, and regret their Choice? We are not women who would abuse and neglect our children like our opponents would like you to think. We are everyday law abiding, loving, kind women and Mothers across this Nation who just need encouragement to parent. Instead, we believed the horrific lie that abortion was our only answer. Adoption is the answer for an unwanted pregnancy, one that is LIFE giving.

We beg you to let every Baby’s Heartbeat be heard by his or her mother. Let the heard heartbeat be that child’s voice and cry for life.  Pass this bill to end the suffering of all people and segments of society wrecked by abortion; stop the murder of innocent baby’s lives. Close the abortion mills.  Take the voices away from the power lobbies and profit motives.  Listen to science to hear the heartbeat. Listen as our Babies’ innocent cries for Life.

Please let History show that on your watch, you stood up and did what was “Right”, what was “Good” and chose LIFE over death!!!…… PLEASE.

Thank you.