

My name is Kerouac Smith and I am here to speak on behalf of myself and my family.

It usually takes between one and three months for a woman to begin to ovulate and for her [cycle](#) to return to normal after stopping breastfeeding.

The Mirena IUD maintains a failure rate of less than 1%.

Extensive research correlates extreme stress with dramatically reduced female fertility. Like the kind of extreme stress a person would experience if diagnosed with cancer,

And yet,

1 year after having a Mirena implanted

10 weeks after weaning our younger son

6 weeks after receiving a diagnosis of Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma

We found out that even under all of these circumstances, in combination, pregnancy is possible.

You can quibble about whether my wife got pregnant before or after her diagnosis.

After all, with a nearly foolproof birth control method in place we weren't thinking about pregnancy. We were thinking about our 4 year old and 1 year old sons and hoping one day we would all sleep through the night. We were thinking about sending our 4 year old to pre-school in the Fall. We were thinking about surgeries and radiation.

I cannot say what my wife felt when she realized she was pregnant. But for me it was shock and then terror. I truly did not know how my wife was going to respond to this new information. But I was filled with a sense of overwhelming relief when she looked me in the eye and said "absolutely not".

By the time my wife realized she was pregnant, consulted her physicians and made an appointment to have an abortion she was well beyond the point of this bill you are considering here today.

She would not have been allowed to have an abortion in the state of Ohio. Sure, we have the means for her to leave the State to obtain an abortion, but the question is "why should she have to?" And what about the women and families who don't have that option?

"Why should any woman who's medical care team thinks the termination of a pregnancy is warranted be deterred by legal judgement made solely on the grounds of religious belief rather than medical understanding?"

The fact remains that treating her cancer was our family's priority and her abortion allowed us to focus on that and our actual children.

I would also like to point out that after this incredibly unlikely situation, I decided that I should make my own reproductive health decision and get a vasectomy. It was quickly scheduled and

performed just down the street from here, in an office next to Grant Hospital. At no point did anyone try to weigh in on my decision, dictate how and when I could do it, or harass me for it.

Every woman deserves that same respect and freedom in their medical decisions.

Thank you for your time.