Testimony to Committee Hearing on S.B. 23

February 19, 2019

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My name is Christine Ballor. I am a regional coordinator for the Silent No More Awareness Campaign in Ohio. I would like to thank the committee for allowing me this opportunity to present my personal testimony in support of Senate Bill 23.

I think an appropriate place to begin would be by speaking from the heart, a mother’s heart. I have no living children, only a child in heaven. After years of denial, rationalizations, and the pain of a wounded heart, I asked God to reveal to me who this child is and it came to me that my child is a boy. I named him Tommy, after his grandfather.

I want you to know that Tommy was conceived by a young sixteen year old girl and an older boyfriend. Tommy’s mother believed that she had to end her pregnancy if she was to keep her boyfriend and not disappoint her family. Planned Parenthood told her it was a simple solution to her problem, that she could live her life as if she had never been pregnant, and besides, at 11 weeks, they told her it was only a clump of tissue, like a tiny tumor.

Poor Tommy, his mother was scared and vulnerable and willing to believe anything that would solve her problem. And it was legal. In her mind, legal meant it must be ok.

A week later, I was a faceless number at the abortion facility. As the sedatives began to wear off in recovery I felt a profound emptiness and ache in my heart. Surrounded by the soft cries of the other girls around me, tears began to flow as I realized the truth, a child, my child, not a clump of cells, was gone forever. As that truth hit me, I told myself, don’t you dare cry, this is what you chose to do and now you can’t undo it. It was then that I decided I would never think about it again. I would bury the pain deep inside myself, as if it had never happened. I lived my life trying to deny that Tommy ever existed, but truth is a hard thing to overcome.

When I was growing up, I dreamed of having children and a loving family. But everything I did after the abortion made that dream impossible, I felt I didn’t deserve it. I contemplated suicide many times. The final time, I fell to my knees and begged God to forgive me, to help me! He answered me with an indescribable, unfathomable love. He awakened my heart and soul and eventually led me to the healing I was blessed to find through a Rachel’s Vineyard Retreat, a post-abortion recovery program.

No amount of rhetoric can deny that Tommy was and is a unique, irreplaceable person. When his body was torn apart, and sucked out of mine, his heart, that had been beating for seven weeks, was silenced. Tommy never got a chance to show the world what his heart could have accomplished. It is not healthy or natural or empowering or compassionate for women to be told they can deny and ignore the beating heart of their own child.

Today, I honor the memory of my son, Tommy, with my own repentant life and a promise to help others find healing and to try to save the hearts of other Tommys … and Jills and Jacks and countless other children who have a God-given purpose and a natural right to have their hearts protected and heard. Thank you for your attention.