

SB 23 Opponent Testimony
February 26, 2019

Senator Burke, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid committee my name is Amanda and I am here to talk about how Senate Bill 23 (the six week abortion ban) and other bills like it endanger the lives of women.

Getting pregnant with my son was not something that came easy. My husband Chris and I had very light fertility intervention in order for me to get pregnant. Pregnancy was also a difficult path for me, as I suffered with morning sickness well into my second trimester as well as unexplained bleeding, and I felt very anxious about the health of my unborn child. My labor was equally as tough as I had had to be induced due to my water breaking three weeks early.

I struggled severely with breastfeeding my child, I was barely sleeping or eating and at about five weeks after my son Henry was born I realized I was suffering from horrifying postpartum depression. Because of the stigma around mental health issues, especially postpartum depression I kept it to myself and as a result had a mental break at about 4 months postpartum.

When my husband and I found out I was pregnant for the second time, I didn't feel particularly excited, and that quickly turned to sheer terror, regret and anxiety. I felt suicidal, I was scared for myself, my husband and my son. I did not tell anyone that I was pregnant and I did not tell my husband about how I was feeling until about two weeks later. Although it was only one conversation with my husband, the decision was not made lightly and there were many "conversations" internally as I came to terms with the decision. I have always been pro-choice, however, did not ever think it would be a decision I would make for myself. We have no idea what we will do when faced with the actual decision, how can we legislate what EVERYONE must do when facing this very PERSONAL, and private decision. How could anyone dictate that they know best for EVERY SINGLE PERSON when we have no idea at all what they are facing?

After a long discussion, my husband and I decided the risk of going through what we went through with Henry and my postpartum depression, this time with two kids, was not something that made sense for our family. Chris point blank told me he said could not go through that again. From my perspective I did not want to add another member to our family when I felt so unsure that it would be ok. I did not want Henry to be an only child, however, I also did not want him to be without his mother. I am still asked on a fairly consistent basis "when are you having another one" or "Is he your ONLY one?" I thought it would be fine, but it came apparent that it could end VERY badly and so I made what I consider to be the harder choice. Maybe the hardest decision I have ever made, but it was MY decision to make!

I made the appointment at the EAST side Planned Parenthood, went for the initial consult, alone, as Chris had to take care of Henry, was there about 4 hours, people were coming and going. As I am sure you know there was a "waiting" period, my next app was two weeks away.

How can you make a decision like that, and be expected to wait...it was distressing to say the least, and it delayed my access to care.

I realized I was pregnant right at this bills cut off at 6 weeks, however, because of the laws of this state, the waiting periods the laws that have forced clinics to close, I was forced beyond that point to over eight weeks before I could access care.

The day of my appointment I had taken the day off work, it was a Friday. I decided to use the medication protocol rather than to have a surgical procedure. I took the first pill at the office, then the second pill on Saturday October 7th. My 35 birthday was 4 days later October 11.

We did not have the resources to add another person to our family, financially, without close local family support (my husband's family is in Cincinnati and mine are in Dayton) and I was in a toxic work environment. The quality of all four lives would have been affected.... My husband and I are still not at a place where adding another person would make sense. We are both currently working two jobs and had I not had access to abortion care I can only imagine the infinite struggles our family would be facing today. We are able to provide more for our son and focus on his future to ensure we continue to thrive as a family of three.

EVERY single person I have told (friends, family, peers) have been supportive...several people have even commended for making the "harder" decision.

Anti-abortion activists and politicians like to talk about how abortion causes people to feel nothing but guilt and regret. I stand here today to tell you I do NOT regret my decision! I am confident that it was the RIGHT decision for me and my family!

Everyday women in our society are told that you get pregnant, you have a baby and life is grand, and that is the case for some women. But other women like me face a very different scenario. We must allow families the space to make the right decisions for their own situations. The state cannot dictate what they must do.

There was no one other than my husband and I present when I got pregnant and where would the STATE have been to help support my family financially, emotionally had I not been able to fight the suicidal ideations or the likely postpartum a second time. Had I not had access to abortion care the impact on my life, my husband's life and my son's life would have been great, and even could have ended my life.

The reasons behind the decisions to have an abortion are as varied as the individuals that have them.

NO ONE has the right to tell me what to do with MY BODY and I say that for ALL women who could be affected by this irresponsible bill.

