

Proponent Testimony before Ohio House Committee 3-10-15 on the Heartbeat Bill, H.B. 69

by Rebecca Kiessling

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Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I'm Rebecca Kiessling, an attorney and national pro-life speaker. I founded an organization of hundreds representing the so-called "hard cases" in the abortion debate. How would you like to be called a "hard case?" If you knew us, you'd realize we are easy to love. Save The 1 is comprised of people like me who were conceived in rape, or incest, women who became pregnant by rape and are either raising their children, birthmothers, or post-abortive from rape, as well as those given a challenging pre-natal diagnosis.

I'm here today to urge you to pass the Fetal Heartbeat bill *with no exceptions* because every child deserves a chance to be born. I was conceived when my birthmother was abducted at knifepoint by a serial rapist. She went to two "back-alley" abortionists, and I was almost aborted – that was my near-death experience. The fact that I was younger doesn't make it any less real or any less significant than someone else's near-death experience. I owe my birth to the law being there to protect me. My birthmother did not choose life for me, but abortion. Pro-Life legislators in Michigan who were 100% pro-life – no exceptions, no compromise, recognized that mine was a life worth saving, and they are my heroes! Today, my birthmother and I are both thankful that we were both protected by law from the horror of abortion.

That's what you have the opportunity to do here today – to protect -- to be heroes for those in Ohio who are at risk for being aborted and you can recognize that their's are lives worth saving.

I had the opportunity to explain this to Gov. Rick Perry – and Newt Gingrich, during their presidential campaigns, and they both came out publicly changing their position on this issue. No one lambasted them as being extremists because they didn't say anything ridiculous. Gov. Perry simply said that my story pierced his heart and he could not look me in the eyes and justify the rape exception any longer. Ever since then, Texas has no longer had rape exceptions in the law. So it's never too late to change your mind.

You'll hear real stories from others as well today, having the opportunity to put faces to this issue, and as you do, please consider: Did any of us ladies deserve the death penalty for the crimes of our rapist fathers? The U.S. Supreme Court has said that rapists don't deserve the death penalty – that it's "cruel and unusual punishment," even for child molesters. So how would an innocent child deserve the death penalty for his crimes? This is America – where we do not punish an innocent person for someone else's crime -- let alone a baby.

More than 80% of pro-life laws passed in the last couple of years at the state level have not had rape exceptions, so it is pragmatic to do so, and having no exceptions is the only way to ensure that you are not violating the equal protection clause of the 14th. Please don't discriminate. We don't deserve to be demonized, marginalized and stigmatized the way we have been at times, and exceptions only serve to perpetuate the myth that a true rape victim couldn't possibly love her child, and that a true rape victim would have had an abortion, when the majority of rape survivor mothers not only choose life, but choose to raise their children. So please consider not only the humanity of the innocent child, but also how much these exceptions actually create a burden on the mothers who love their children dearly -- their beauty from ashes. In the same way, I honor my birthmother, and I bring her healing. Thank you.