

I am here to testify on behalf of the Willke Heartbeat bill, which is now named after my fellow physician and cousin, John C. Willke, M.D.

Let us be totally honest with this subject. Every one of you on the committee, and in the halls of this legislature, all know that a beating heart is life. A beating heart in a human being is a human life. We do not send the patient in the hospital or elsewhere who has suffered some type of brain death to the morgue or the plastic bag, until the heart has ceased beating. Every one of you on the committee knows this. As humans protecting life, a heartbeat provides hope and solace, regardless of the other bodily functions, to those deeply concerned with that individual.

It is with this in mind, that we strongly support the heartbeat bill.

You can argue when life begins, although the biology textbooks are pretty clear on this subject. You can argue when pregnancy begins with conception or implantation, but the fact that a new life has formed is irrefutable at conception. You can argue whether the child in the womb can feel pain at 20 weeks, but you cannot argue the fact that a child has a beating heart around the sixth week. That beating heart is beating with the exact same heart although a little smaller in size than the one inside your chest and my chest without any alterations except those that are age related. If nothing else signifies a human life, a beating heart has always provided that.

You may argue political points, and you may argue whether Roe v Wade was adjudicated correctly, but you cannot argue the fact that in every pregnancy around the sixth through eighth week, a beating heart is heard in every womb.

Whether you wish to deny that fact, for your own political point, is certainly your choice. If you believe in God, as I do, then all of us will have to account for every decision we made, both for our welfare and the welfare of those under our care. If you're comfortable standing in front of the Lord and explaining to him that a human heart beating at six weeks is not human life, that choice is yours. Whether he will except your reasoning is another gamble, the consequences of which are very clearly spelled out in his directives.

Every one of you on this committee knows in your heart that a beating heart at six weeks represents a living human being. For political purposes some of you have opted to deny this. The next time you look in the mirror unclutter the mind and be very honest with yourself about whether a heartbeat in a six week pregnancy represents a human life or not. Remember the joy that you felt with your pregnancy when you heard the heartbeat of your in utero baby. That proved to you that life existed. Had we had the tools then, as we do today, to allow you to hear it at six weeks you would have been just as amazed. Vote for this petition with your heart, for in your heart comes the wisdom of the soul.

Thank you for the chance to allow me to petition on behalf of the Willke Heartbeat bill.

Dr. Thomas J. Willke, M.D.