

Chairman Derrickson, Vice Chairman Ginter, Ranking Member Howse and Members of the Ohio House Community and Family Advancement Committee, My name is Gretchen Doerfler, and I'm writing this to encourage the Ohio House of Representatives to pass H.B. 69, as I have first-hand experience with Post Abortion Syndrome, and am a counselor at a Crisis Pregnancy Center.

In the summer of 1989 I found myself pregnant and not sure what to think of it. In the back of my mind I thought this would bring back my ex fiancé and my mother would be supportive. I couldn't have been more wrong. My mother told me I had to get rid of the baby right away and the father of the baby said he would pay for me to abort it.

Feeling like I had no choice I obediently made an appointment at an abortion clinic and had the baby aborted within just a few days of seeing that positive test.

There was no pre counseling and no pregnancy crisis centers of which I was aware. It was a "simple" procedure. I went in, signed papers, was put to sleep and the next thing I knew I was waking up and encouraged to try to get up and walk.

For the first year I can say that I felt my "problem" was fixed. I dealt with the emotional impact by denying myself any feeling of regret and convincing myself that the timing wasn't right to have a baby.

But the suppression, denial and guilt had turned me into a very hot tempered wife and mother several years later. Every little thing made me angry, and I yelled and threw things. I yelled at my kids and my husband and lost friendships because I was so angry. Every spring I would go through feelings of the need to "nurture" and brought home a new pet every year for a few years.

In 2001 I met my neighbor and she told me all about a crisis pregnancy center at which she was a counselor. I never knew such a thing existed. After about two years of our developing friendship, she helped me to see that I needed counseling for my abortion, that I didn't have to be angry, and that I just needed to deal with the pent up feelings of guilt I had for aborting one of my children. Despite the counseling, I still think about the third child for whom I made the wrong decision. His or her possibilities were eliminated by my decision.

I share my story today in support of H.B. 69, or The Heartbeat Bill. Had the Heartbeat Bill been law when I had my abortion, the choice would have already been made, and it's one I was not ready to make at that time, as I was not thinking clearly. Rather, I was an emotional mess. And although the state is not a substitute for making the right decision, it should err on the side of innocent life, and of the guilt that most post abortive women experience.

In July of 2009 I was hired at Pregnancy Solutions and Services in Akron, Ohio. I counsel the girls through their pregnancy crisis. We give them Options Counseling (parenting, adoption and abortion). We give them details of what an abortion entails at every stage of pregnancy, the risks during and after abortion procedures and the emotional and physical side effects.

In my five years at Pregnancy Solutions and Services I have seen a vast array of girls and their mental state both before and after an abortion. Many girls come back to us within a year of having seen us and

choosing abortion. They are pregnant again and hoping that the new pregnancy will help them to deal with the feelings of regret they are experiencing.

I have also seen girls come beaming with a smile to show us the baby they chose to keep and tell us that they are so thankful we helped them know the truth. Other girls come to us wanting an ultrasound so we can tell them that the abortion didn't work and they are still pregnant.

I have had girls call to tell me that their abortion was the most "horrific" experience ever and they don't know how they will get over it.

I also have girls that want to have the abortion but want to know how far they are in pregnancy so they know how much it will cost. We give them an ultrasound, and as soon as they see the heartbeat, and the baby wiggle they tell us they could never go through with the abortion and ask, "Can I have pictures?"

### **"You Can't Legislate Morality"**

Many claim that the state should not legislate morality. Yet, the legislature does this all the time, and for good reason. Laws against rape, child abuse, murder, and so on are on the books to protect life, and the well-being of the citizenry and society.

The life of the "unborn human individual" needs a level of protection from the state as well. One reason pro-choice advocates are adamant about their "right to choose" is based on *their* right life. Yet, it is the innate value of human life that gives one worth, and why this is such a heated debate. The argument is one of pitting life against life, and the older of the two wins. Therefore, the unborn human individual needs someone to act on his or her behalf, as the act of abortion is final.

The passage of H.B. 69 would be another tool by which we can save innocent lives, and would level the field for those who cannot defend themselves. And although such legislation is not embraced by those who support the right to choose, it is a reasonable solution for anyone who values life; even the life of the unborn. As Aristotle said, "The law is reason, free from passion." And if we are looking at this issue rationally, the conclusion is plain. Rather than pitting one life against another, let's establish reasonable restrictions, as the consequences are serious.

For me and those with whom I work, we will continue to provide information, support, and assistance to those pregnant women who are seeking answers. Passage of H.B. 69 will exponentially improve our impact on these women, save countless lives, and prevent many cases of Post Abortion Syndrome.