

Proponent Testimony H.B 69 Heartbeat Bill Corey Shankleton

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I'd like to begin for thanking this committee for laboring so long and patiently over this process. As I was preparing this testimony, I wondered which words would best convey to you my support for the Heartbeat Bill. What could I say that hasn't already be said once, twice, or more? I could tell you that 10 years ago; when I began working with women from central city Toledo, who had drug, alcohol and prostitution backgrounds, I never considered the abortion issue. Until lady after lady began to confess their hidden secret, that many of them had an abortion. Actually, many of them entered into their current lifestyle as an attempt to hide the pain of the abortion. Often times, long after the drinking has stopped and their families have begun to mend, the one haunting thought that overwhelms them is that they often cannot handle a voice which says, "I killed my baby". The majority of these women have never faced the truth, thus allowing years of havoc in their lives, but you've heard all of that. I could share with you from my 12 years as an ordained minister who has prayed over and in most of Ohio's 88 counties - standing on their court house lawns asking for God to grant mercy rather than judgment. The word of God plainly says "the shedding of innocent blood defiles the land" and, that blood cries out for judgment, but you've heard all of that as well. So what is left unsaid? I believe what is left unsaid is the obvious; it is what has brought all of us here. The overwhelming sense to do what is right. I do not pretend that by giving this testimony I am going to sway those of you who are pro-choice, I would love to, however it is unlikely, and that is okay. So then what must be said to those of us who are already firm pro-life advocates? First, as I have sat with you for hours of testimony, one thing has become increasingly clear. And that is that no one knows. No one knows what the court will look like by the time this bill hits the Supreme Court. And if we wait till the court is in our favor, no one knows what this legislative body will look like. No one knows if Justice Kennedy has been signaling that he is ready. We have had well-versed professionals from both sides, even within our own movement, disagree on that point. No one knows with certainty what the long-term effects of this decision will - or perhaps will not - accomplish. So how do all of you take on the impossible task of weighing the unknown and rendering a decision? I know none of us who have labored in this movement would ever want to cause it harm; most of us have given our life to it. Well, I pose to you another approach - keep it simple. The walls of this building along with those of most of our governmental structures are adorned with quotes from men and women who seldom weighed a political cost. Most of them were not your standard men and women, for standard men and women do not have their words engraved in stone. These men and women often referred to the standard they used as a guide, an internal moral compass to do what is right. In today's society that statement seems naive and even foolish. The compass has been culturally clouded; yet it remains. However, who today would say that this nation was foolish when, as a fledgling nation, it arose against Britain - then the largest and most powerful nation in the world - and defied their unjust rule. They were little more than men with ideas, dreams and a willingness to risk self and country to do what was right. I understand the task before

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you is daunting and much political and personal pressure has been applied to you, that is the way our system works. However, remember as well-educated and informed one may be, mistakes are an inevitable part of our human nature. In 1973 no one thought Roe vs. Wade stood a chance. It was in fact unconstitutional. Most court watchers said the current makeup would not support such a frontal attack to our constitution as it stood. Those with a vision were not deterred. They pressed on and established the most radical departure from precedence in our history. Some have said we should take small incremental steps. I wonder what those who will succumb to the horror of abortion today would say to that. Are they an acceptable casualty for strategy's sake? I have been accused of being a dreamer I admit, but isn't that what has made our nation so attractive to those abroad? My vision of America - and ultimately the God upon whom this nation was founded - is doing what is right regardless of the cost. We teach it to our children to do what is right. Now is our chance to portray it to them. As long as everyone is suggesting what could happen, indulge me as I present a scenario. What if you pass this bill, it is brought before the Supreme Court, and those who thought Kennedy was ready were right. Even those on the other side of the issue have stated "Roe will be dismantled in the short term". What if Dr. Wilke -the father of the movement- could be trusted in this next step when he stated, "The Heartbeat Bill is the arrow in the heart of Roe"? I am young and perhaps naïve, but one thing I have learned in discussing strategy, is that fear of failure is never a good philosophy for success. No great feat has ever been accomplished through fear, perhaps in the face of - but never because of. All of us would support this bill if we knew it would accomplish what its proponents have stated, even those with in the movement agree in "principal". However, guarantee is not a luxury we have. Neither did they in 1973. Many within the movement have stood and battled. Some find it hard to believe this could be it, there is only one way to know; vote to protect those who are without protection. Remember our state motto, "With God all things are possible". Members of the House, today is your day, we place our dream in your hands. My prayer is that you will place the issue of life back into the hands of the One to whom it belongs, the Creator of life.

Thank You,

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