

Jayme Bates

Senate Bill No. 214

Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Wednesday, October 21st, 2015

Good afternoon Chairman Coley, Vice-chair Seitz and members of the committee. Thank you for allowing me to testify before you regarding House Bill 64. As a current board member, and previous client, of Union County Pregnancy Care Center in Marysville, Ohio, I am here to share with you the stark contrast between an abortion clinic and a pregnancy care center. Both of which changed my life.

At the age of 19 in 1996 I became pregnant. I was terrified. Terrified of what others would think of me, what my parents would say, how would I support a child? In my panic, I made the only choice I thought I had. I grabbed the yellow pages and ultimately ended up at Founders on E Broad St. I sat in a small room lined with chairs. I was with a group of women and a 13 year old girl with her mom. Waiting to have an abortion. They brought in a cup of pills for each of us to take. And then systematically took each of us back. In a cold room, alone without a support person, I ended my child's life. This was not a place of hope and love. It was sterile, cold, impersonal, a business transaction. I had a problem, they got rid of it. And to be honest, that's what I thought I wanted. I was relieved for a time. Until reality set in and I realized that nothing would be the same again.

Fast forward to 2009 when I first walked in to Union County Pregnancy Care Center. I wanted to help women be encouraged to make the choice for life. So they wouldn't be haunted by the death of their child everyday like I was. If I could help one woman feel like she had a friend fighting for her then my baby's life was not in vain. When I walked in, there were smiling faces. A warm atmosphere. A welcoming hug from a complete stranger to tell me they were glad to see me. Love, hope, security. Those were the feelings I felt. A complete contrast to the sadness, hopeless, cold I felt walking into the abortion clinic.

After meeting with the director, Kat Shanks, I began to go through a program with her to heal from my past. So that I could be ready to give comfort to others through the comfort I had received. Without addressing my own brokenness I wouldn't be able to help these ladies. This Thursday I will start my 4<sup>th</sup> program as a facilitator to help walk other post abortive women through healing. It gives me great joy to welcome those women with a hug and a smile to let them know they are not alone. That they are not alone and that the center will walk with them.

If only I had walked into a pregnancy care center instead of an abortion clinic all those years ago. The ladies who come in to our centers today are greeted with a smile, a hug, and a place that feels like home. We love them through the scariest times of their lives. And contradictory to popular belief, we do actually help them through pregnancy and beyond. We provide access to real, life-affirming services. Free counseling, programs to learn how to be a better parent, baby supplies including clothes, formula, diapers, blankets and more.

Abortion clinics feed on fear, panic, and selfishness.

Pregnancy Centers bring hope and support to what seems like a hopeless situation.

I ask that you support positive birth outcomes by ending the State's association with the abortion industry. What women need is access to real choice. The choice to choose life for the child already growing within her.