

**Testimony of Julie N. Busby, Proponent of S.B. 23, the Heartbeat Bill**  
*Ohio Senate Health, Human Services & Medicaid Committee, 3/6/2019*

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Chairman Burke, Vice-Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio & members of the committee:

11 years ago, I found myself in an unwanted pregnancy. I had two older children. I had quit my job to stay at home with my kids, and several months into my pregnancy, I found out my husband was having an affair.

So here I was, financially dependent upon my husband to pay the mortgage, the car payment, and all the bills...bills that were in my name because his credit was bad, and now at my most vulnerable point he had betrayed my trust. Not only was I hurt from the betrayal, but I was angry that for the first time in my life, I was financially dependent upon a man--and this is what I got in return. When I told him I was pregnant, he made it very clear he did not want this child, and now, neither did I.

I remember the day I had wished for my unborn child's death. A friend of mine had called me. Much like my situation, she had two other children, was pregnant, and had recently found out about her husband's affair. Only on this day, she called to tell me she had miscarried. As selfish as it sounds, I didn't feel sympathy for her. Instead, I was envious. *"Why does she get to have a miscarriage and I have to have this baby?"* I asked God.

Unlike my first two pregnancies, there was no anxious anticipation of my unborn son's arrival. This pregnancy made me feel trapped and I was angry about it. I wanted nothing further to connect me to this man who had betrayed me...and I certainly didn't want to carry a child by him. I wanted to get a job, leave him, and never depend on another man again. But who would hire a pregnant woman? I swore as soon as this baby was born that's what I would do.

Well, nine months of pregnancy had finally come and I was at the hospital about to give birth to a baby that I still didn't want. The painful contractions were gripping me, a reminder of the pain I felt inside my heart. I wasn't thinking about holding or cuddling this newborn. All I could think about was that I was completely empty inside and this crying, needy baby was going to be pulling on me – wanting attention and love – something I felt totally incapable of giving. There wasn't even a desire to give it.

But regardless of how I felt about it, he made his way into the world. Still, I felt nothing towards him. No motherly affection whatsoever. I was numb from my pain. I watched the nurses take him to the sink to wash him. I turned away, curled up in my pain on the bed.

I heard him crying.

I looked over at him. He looked so defenseless and rejected. He reminded me of how I felt. Suddenly, something in my heart changed. He needed me. I decided I would love this baby, and the more his father rejected him, the more I would love him.

I named him Hawke because a hawk soars above everything. I decided that this child would rise above all life's problems and soar in life. And to my surprise, instead of a crying, needy baby that would tug and pull from me at one of the darkest points in my life, he became exactly what I needed. He was the happiest and easiest baby ever! In fact, his first word was not *mommy* or

*daddy*, it was *happy*. On days when I would be crying, he would walk around the house saying "Happy day....happy day" ....and before I knew it, my tears would turn into a smile.

Nine years later, this little boy still makes me smile. He is the light of my life! I absolutely cannot imagine my life without him. What I thought was the worst thing to happen to me – an unwanted pregnancy at a financially vulnerable point in my life, turned out to be one of the best surprises in my life.

What I hope to leave with you today is this one thought.

The *only* thing that kept me from terminating my pregnancy was my belief that abortion is murder. But how many women daily find themselves in predicaments such as mine, however, have been sold a lie that this is not a child, but simply a choice to terminate, what they like to call a fetus; only to find out years later, that they murdered their child? How many women have had the best surprises of their life stolen from them because they weren't told the truth?

I am asking you today to pass the Heartbeat Bill so that women like me can be given a chance to see that what they think is the worst thing to happen to them, can turn out to be the greatest gift in their life.

How many more Hawkes are out there waiting to soar?

Julie N. Busby