Good afternoon,

My name is Joseph Giampa Jr and I am grateful to be here today. I work as a nurse in the Emergency department (ED) at a level 1 trauma center.

I was raised to help others in need and the United States too has a long history of accepting and helping those from all walks of life. Yet our country routinely sacrifices the lives of the most helpless among us; those without a voice to defend themselves. In the ED we treat everyone who walks through our door and believe that every life is worth saving. However, elective abortion serves no medical purpose and it does nothing to heal anyone of any sort of illness. It is anti-life.

 I once helped to treat a young lady who was 8 weeks pregnant. Her boyfriend told me they were thinking about having an abortion. I turned to the young couple and said that abortion was one of the options available to them. Then I gently informed them that another option was giving the child up for adoption. There are many couples who would love and care for the child. I also mentioned that with adoption there would be no post-abortion guilt or complications. Tears started flowing down my patient’s face. I wondered if she felt a lack of support from her boyfriend, family, community… I retrieved a tissue box and again gently said, the choice is yours, I just want what’s best for all my patients.

Another patient came in, this one with post-abortion complications. An ultrasound revealed the presence of a developing fetus. The abortion clinic had somehow overlooked that she was carrying twins. The patient was distraught, crying, expressing remorse over her decision and saddened by the loss of one of her twins. She said “it doesn’t seem fair that one died while the other gets to live.”

The ED physicians and trauma surgeons that I spoke with could not think of a single example in their combined 35 years of experience where they were forced to choose between the life of a mother and a child. These are not common scenarios yet it seems the opponents of this bill commonly site medical emergencies as though they are a frequent occurrence. Save the mother, save the child. This is what our Emergency physicians had to say and that has been their experience.

When I hear discussions from groups about a woman’s right to choose it is nearly always a euphemism for abortion, never a right to choose life. To say that the unborn are not alive is ludicrous. Whether we are discussing the human development of a zygote, embryo, fetus or a neonate, infant, toddler, it makes little difference. The idea that location inside the womb means a fetus is not alive, yet traveling down the birth canal 6 inches now somehow grants life is unscientific The newborn is at a lower level of development than a toddler, but it is still alive and human. The fetus is at a lower level of development than the newborn, but it is still alive and human. It goes against our professional training to end life and to decide who can live and who cannot. So much is said of a women’s right to choose, what about a baby’s right to live?

 A colleague told me that she chose to have an abortion because she didn’t think she would be able to care for the child financially and she knew that the father would not be present in the child’s life. I asked if she had considered adoption. She said no, because she feared that she would grow attached to the child and not want to give it up. Having an abortion was more convenient. She expressed regret over her decision and said she would never do that again, the abortion “felt like something was being ripped out of me.” Well, something had been ripped out of her: a human being.

My own grandmother was in a vegetative state for the last 7 years of her life. Even a fetus is able to move and kick its mother internally, but my grandmother couldn’t even move, she was closer to an embryo developmentally. Was she any less alive? I find it Ironic that assisted suicide is deemed unlawful because it terminates life prematurely but termination of an unborn is ok. As a society we champion human rights, but when it comes to the unborn it has been decided they should have no voice. Sadly, we try to mandate and legislate laws that sanction their death rather than allowing them the same right to life that we enjoy. This is disturbing and hypocritical.

I plead as an ED nurse that you extend the same rights to life to the unborn that we provide to every born person that enters our ED. If we believe in the sanctity of life for all, then it must include everyone. We cannot and should not simply say this life is worth saving and this one is not. Instead let our focus be on providing resources, encouragement, and support to women throughout pregnancy and beyond. This way they’ll know they are growing life and –regardless of how it came to be-, that it is beautiful, right and worthy of being protected.

Thank you for allowing me to speak today.