

My name is Carolyn Harding, I'm a community organizer, radio/podcast host, candidate for Ohio House State Rep and I have three abortion stories.

In my 20's I was a single working woman in New York City and I got pregnant. At that time I was instructed to wait til I was 8 weeks along before I could get an abortion. Planned Parenthood was readily available and accessible for me. This Choice was clear. I didn't want to start a family at that time.

Years later I was married, had a toddler and I got pregnant again. I was very much looking forward to the birth of our second child. I was over 40, so I had a OBGYN specialist. When we were given the choice to have an amniocentesis test, as there is a risk of miscarriage, I opted for a newly developed ultrasound to check for anomalies, and all appeared normal.

I did the routine prenatal blood tests at my check ups, and I was nearing the 16th week when I got a phone call from the office, asking me to come in for another round of tests. My results were concerning.

My husband and I were anxious. We drew the blood for the tests and waited, several days later the specialist called us to come in. He was solemn, straight forward, and said, "It doesn't look pretty". What did that mean? Was there anything we could do? He explained that our baby was missing half of her chromosomes. That she would most likely die in utero, soon after birth or would have no cognitive or physical quality of life. We immediately made appointments with my regular OB and a geneticist, and they both confirmed our specialist's prognosis.

Our hearts broke, shattered. I remember walking along the Olentangy River path and praying to the Creator, what do I do? What do we do? I walked along in silence and felt a profound

sense of clarity, that I would not bring a child into the world to suffer.

I chose to terminate my pregnancy, knowing my baby could suffer a short while, but not for hours, or weeks or months or years.

This Choice changed me - no black and white law can ever reach the depth.

A year later I got pregnant, and at eight weeks her/his/their heart stopped beating, and we went into surgery to remove the remains of our baby.

This Choice was for my health.

I'm a privileged, white woman. I've had three abortions, and I am grateful that I had a Choice in all four of my pregnancies.

Ohio is a melange of races, cultures, religions, philosophies, and metaphysical beliefs. Our forefathers and foremothers, having suffered from religious intolerance and laws, set up the time honored maxim of Separation of Church and State. I stand that we continue to honor this important democratic doctrine.

HB 598 represents the will of the minority. As legislators, you are entrusted to vote for All the People of Ohio. The majority of Ohioans want Choice, to decide whether or not to have an abortion. I stand for your choice and I stand for my choice.

Vote No for HB 598.

Thank You.