

Dear Vermont House of Representatives,

My name is Cameron Powers and I am a resident of Vermont. I would like to start by saying thank you for organizing a hearing to listen to the opinion of Vermonters regarding current abortion legislation put forward in the House. I am publicly stating my opposition for bill H.57 on the grounds that it does not include any restrictions to abortion and does not recognize any rights for a fetus up until the moment of birth. Additionally, H.57 has the potential to allow for and encourage discrimination including, but not limited to, gender and/or disability bias. As such, I do not believe that it represents the opinion of the majority of Vermont citizens you have been chosen to represent.

First, in regard to lack of restrictions, the bill as written would allow a mother to abort her child for any reason until the moment he/she is born. This means that our state would be the first to allow a healthy mother with a viable, full term pregnancy to terminate it for a reason such as inconvenience. The lack of restrictions would also allow non-residents to come to Vermont to seek late-term abortions that are not legal in most other states. What legal protection would there be against those wishing to set up abortion mills for financial gain? I urge you as representatives to reconsider the lack of restrictions in this bill.

In addition to the lack of restrictions, H.57 states that a fetus has no rights up until the moment of birth. Each and every one of us is here because of our concern for human rights. We all care about the rights of women and many of us, myself included, are concerned for the rights of the unborn. In order for some women to exercise the right to terminate a late term pregnancy, the law must state that the child they are carrying is a "fetus" and as such has no rights. Otherwise, let's be honest, such an act would be considered murder. This language, however, while protecting the rights of some women, takes away the rights of others. There are many women, I would be safe to say the majority, who consider the life growing inside them to be a baby who is very much human and deserving to be protected. For example, when we announce a pregnancy, we exclaim, "We are having a baby!" I have never heard anyone say, "I am having a fetus!" Also, we celebrate baby showers, not fetus showers. Often we name our children while they are still in the womb. On a more serious note, if the life growing inside of us has a problem, doctors sometimes perform surgery in utero. In reality, we all know that a fetus does not magically become a baby the moment it exits it's mother. The only logical conclusion is that it is a baby inside as well. The wording is just semantics. Unfortunately, to write a law saying a fetus has no rights is the same as telling many women their baby has no rights. If they are hit by a drunk driver, or punched by an abuser and lose their babies, there are no legal protections for them because their "fetus" had no rights according to Vermont law. I implore you to consider the rights of all Vermont women as you discuss H.57, not just those who want to secure abortion rights.

Finally, I am concerned that H.57 encourages discrimination. As a state, we have anti-discrimination laws protecting against gender bias and disabilities. Vermonters are proud of these laws and as legislators you have fought hard for them. If H. 57 becomes law, what is there to stop someone from deciding that a late term fetus, to use the bill's terminology, should not be born because of it's gender or disability? It states that the mother can terminate for any reason. Does this not go directly against all that we stand for as citizens and lawmakers of Vermont? We strive to ensure that people of all genders and disabilities receive respect and fair treatment in our educational systems and work places, but allow them to be killed for these reasons before they are born? If this is the case, shame on Vermont...perhaps our legacy will be that of the most discriminatory of all 50 states.

In conclusion, I urge you to take your position as lawmakers in Vermont very seriously as you consider H.57. Ask yourself questions such as, "What are the potential pitfalls of unrestricted abortion laws?" Also, "Is this law in the best interest of all the women in the state of Vermont?" Finally, if you truly decide to support H.57, the only abortion law without restriction and complete denial of fetal rights, then you should be grateful with every breath you take that your mother chose life for you when you were just a "fetus".

Sincerely,
Cameron Powers

Sent from my iPhone