

TO MEMBERS OF THE VERMONT HOUSE

Thank you for making this hearing possible. My name is Charlotte C. Kennedy, and I live at 112 Pearl St. in Grand Isle, VT. I am a registered voter and vote in every election.

I am here in support of Bill H.57. In 1961, I was a college Senior and had been married for a little more than a year. I was shocked to learn that one of my professors, only a few years older than I was pregnant and that the pregnancy was tubal. That was pre-Roe by more than a decade. That pregnancy was clearly a death sentence for both the baby and the Mother. Shortly after I heard about it my professor died from this tubal pregnancy. So did the fetus. This death offered no solace to her young husband or to her. This death did not need to happen. The bill before you will make choice a permanent part of Vermont statutes.

As a person who repeatedly heard as I was growing up that I was an “accident” and “unintended”, I am also aware that all of my biological family and people in the small VT town where I grew up also knew this. It was not pleasant. No child should ever receive this painful message. Thus my husband and I planned our family and have been delighted with the results—two adult children and their two spouses all in professions that serve others. We now have 5 grandchildren who were planned including one who was adopted. Recently I was asked if I was a Great Grandmother yet. I happily said, “No” and that none of our young adult grandchildren were in a position yet to take on the responsibility of becoming parents. When they are ready to be parents, I will be delighted to be a great

grandmother. Meantime I hope they will be the responsible young people their parents have encouraged them to be, and that when they are ready to take on parenting they will do so if they choose. Parenthood should not be forced on others, nor should women ever be required to choose an abortion, or to carry an unwanted baby to term and then give it up for adoption. Forced birth is not the way to help a baby find a welcoming environment. The right to choose should always be available to women. The right to be cared for and loved should be the environment into which every child is born. Becoming a parent should be the result of choosing to do so, not the result of failed birth control or rape.

For the men present here, please remember that you are an integral part of making women pregnant. You, however, are not the ones who must go through the rigors of pregnancy and birth. The people who do that are women and the choice to remain pregnant should be theirs.

Finally keep in mind that an unwanted child who is told about it carries that scar throughout life.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak.