

Dear Legislators and fellow Vermont citizens,

I write as a former fertilized egg, embryo, fetus and child. I write as the product of an inconvenient pregnancy to an unwed mother. I write as a mother, one who has carried each stage of pregnancy within my body and despite hardships, welcomed my children into the world. I write as one who makes choices each day that affects the welfare of others and realizes that my choices have consequences not only for myself, but for others and I make better choices when I research my options and have access to resources that help me learn more

I am in awe at what little I know of the advances being made in science. I have read that they have [DNA tests](#) that can identify your parents, siblings, and distant relatives. I am amazed that we can look at a cell and see that every cell in our body is unique to us and that ½ of our DNA strand comes from each of our parents. From the moment of fertilization, a new, unique unrepeatable cell line is created that will culminate in a unique unrepeatable living person and every cell in that person belongs singularly to that person. We know that a child's heart beats only [22 days](#) after conception and that a child born at only [22 weeks gestation can survive outside the womb](#). It is amazing to me that the more we know through science about life, the less our society will acknowledge to be true when it comes to nascent human life.

. Under HB 57, as written, a mother may choose "[whether to give birth to a child or have an abortion](#)."¹ When I look at this wording, I have to ask – "Is a child only a child if a mother deems it to be child-worthy? At what point is the new life in the mother considered a child – only when it is wanted?" If this law is truly about choice – should there not also be information and support for the mother who desires to give birth to her child but needs the support of her community to make this decision. What of the woman who desires to keep her child but the father will not pay to support the child but offers to pay for an abortion? The law speaks about choice then only allows for unrestricted abortion – giving no options for adoption or child support.

In the legislature at this time, I read that there is also a [bill in process to protect lab rats from experimentation that will allow them more rights that a human fetus](#). There are no safeguards in HB 57 against the selling of the aborted fetus for scientific research, unrestricted abortion could lead to the trafficking in human cell lines for research. HB 57, needs to have some protection to avoid the abortion of children for the purpose of scientific experimentation – no one should profit financially from the death of a human embryo or fetus or child. Under HB 57, the "A fertilized egg, embryo, or fetus" will have no rights at all under Vermont law. This goes way beyond [current abortion laws set on Roe v. Wade](#) and does not allow a mother whose unborn child is killed in a DUI accident to have recourse for the child she has lost. What of an unborn child killed in an attack upon it's mother? This law does not

¹ "(b) Every individual who becomes pregnant has the fundamental right to 16 choose to carry a pregnancy to term, give birth to a child, or to have an 17 abortion. 18

(c) A fertilized egg, embryo, or fetus shall not have independent rights 19 under Vermont law."

have protection for a child that is born alive when the mother intended to abort it – do we then allow the living, born child to die? Is this really what Vermont wants to be known for – a state that has kills it's children with the most liberal abortion laws in the world? I have read Art Wolf's economics columns where he comments on the declining population in Vermont – as it is, our declining birth rate does not bode well economically for our state – this legislation will not help to improve our population or economic situation.

I am grateful that my mother chose life for me despite the hardships she faced when I was most vulnerable, I feel duty bound to speak for others who are also in this vulnerable position and relying upon their mothers to nourish the life that has begun within their womb. Each of us owes a debt to our mothers who chose to give us life, can we not give our own children this basic right? Please do not allow this bill to become law – rather, let us create a bill that will support life from conception until birth and also support the woman and her child.

Sincerely,

Patricia Lawson

Cambridge, VT