

Testimony for February 6, 2019, Public Hearing on H.57, Vermont State House, Montpelier, Vermont

My name is Sue Burton. I live in Burlington. I urge you to support H.57.

There's a long history in Vermont of independence, tolerance. Please don't let a well orchestrated minority restrict a woman from making decisions about her own life.

In 1972 I was hired at the Vermont Women's Health Center, which was founded to provide a full range of women's reproductive health care, including abortion. For over 25 years I was a physician assistant there and at Planned Parenthood. Over the years, I have provided care to Vermont women from every walk of life.

1 in 4 women in the United States has had an abortion. Everyone in this room knows someone who has had an abortion. She may not have told you. Abortion is a personal decision.

I got involved in women's health in 1971 when I was a Community VISTA in Franklin County. I met a woman who was pregnant and frantic and had taken the drug Ergotrate from their dairy barn to induce an abortion. She survived the heavy bleeding, but her story startled me into action.

Why am I bringing up this ancient history? Because, history is repeating itself -- in Texas, where clinics have been shut down, women are crossing into Mexico to buy over-the-counter ulcer drugs to cause an abortion. They don't know how many pills to take or the risks involved. And there's nowhere to turn for back-up. Ergotrate in 1971, ulcer drugs in 2019. Do we want Vermont to go back in time?

Restricting abortion will not make it go away. It will make it unsafe. A hundred years ago my great-aunt Nettie died of an illegal abortion. Please, do not send us back to those days.

Thank you for your careful consideration.

*Sue Burton*

Sue Burton, 17 Bayview St., Burlington, Vermont 05401