

Good evening, I am Robin Chesnut-Tangerman from Middletown Springs.  
Greetings to the committee and thank you for hosting this public forum.

With a highly charged and ultimately personal issue such as reproductive freedom, discord is to be expected. This evening I would like to share a moment of unexpected agreement in hopes that we can find more of them.

As a legislator in the previous biennium I was engaged in a spirited but respectful debate with a constituent who was adamantly opposed to this same bill then, and to abortion in particular.

I shared my perspective with him that I was simply advocating a person's right to make their own reproductive choices, and that as a legislator and as a human being it is not MY choice. I do not have the right, the moral authority to tell a woman that she MUST bear a child any more than I have the right to tell her that she CANNOT bear a child.

"Exactly!" he said. "That is between her and God."

"Exactly!" I said. "That is her choice, not yours or mine." Long pause.

I don't know whether he was persuaded or not, but I am certain that the legislature should not be making the decision whether a woman must or cannot bear a child. Prop 5 ensures that the decision remains where it belongs - with the individual. Please support it.

Some will argue that the language in Prop 5 is too vague or overly broad and thus open to judicial interpretation. I would remind them that that is exactly the job description of the judicial branch. The legislature makes laws, the executive enforces them and the judiciary interprets them. That is the strength of our system.

The constitutional guarantee of freedom of speech is equally broad and vague and continues to be interpreted even 233 years after ratification. I urge you to support Prop 5 and its constitutional guarantee of individual freedom.

Thank you,  
Robin Chesnut-Tangerman