

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF PROPOSAL 5

My name is Sandy Haas, and I was proud to be a member of this committee when we passed Proposal 5 last term.

I'm here tonight to share my lived experience from the era *before* Roe v. Wade. Legislatures across the country are passing laws to take us back to the 1960s, when abortion was a CRIME. Women's rights have become a political issue. Just as our constitution protects the rights of racial and religious minorities, we must protect women's reproductive rights.

In chatting with people last term, I realized that most women are too young to remember life in the 1960s. As one of the oldest Baby Boomers, I recall that decade vividly.

I first learned about abortion from the TV show The Defenders, in 1962. That's when I understood that only the most courageous doctors in this country were willing to perform the procedure. Women who could not find a willing doctor often hemorrhaged. Some even died from abortions performed by criminals.

I was lucky. I never had a failure of contraception. But I did worry every single month. Many of my friends were not so fortunate. One college classmate was flown to Mexico by her mother to assure that her abortion was done by a doctor.

In 1967, Governor Ronald Reagan signed a law legalizing abortion in the state of California, where I lived. We all breathed easier after that.

When this committee was drafting the contraception bill last term, the Dept. of Health told us that nearly HALF of all pregnancies in Vermont are unintended. . (see link, p.4)

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2020/WorkGroups/House%20Human%20Services/Access%20to%20Contraception/W~Kim%20Swartz~Ensuring%20Access%20to%20Quality%20Family%20Planning%20Services%20for%20Vermonters~4-3-2019.pdf>

We worked hard to increase access to the most effective forms of birth control. But we know there will always be contraceptive failures. Women's health and safety must be protected.

I urge you to pass PR 5.

*Submitted by Sandy Haas, Rochester*