

Chairman Barker, Vice Chairman Awerkamp, Ranking Member Ruiz and members of the committee;

As a citizen of Kansas, I am writing to express my opposition to Resolution HCR5019. I believe that the constitution of the state of Kansas correctly protects the right of the individual to make decisions about his or her own body, health, family formation and family life, including the right to decide whether to continue a pregnancy.

I believe that Resolution HCR5019, which seeks to give the state legislative power over an individual's life and liberty, is in direct opposition to our individual human rights.

As a resident of this great state, I have been able to exert my autonomy to make decisions about my family, my body and my security even in the midst of circumstances outside of my control.

My personal story is one that begins with loss. A decade ago, my husband was killed in an auto accident, and I suddenly found myself raising an infant and a young daughter alone. In mere months, my situation further changed when I learned that my husband and I had conceived a third child in the days before his death. In the matter of one short year, I found my family changed from a two parent, one child household into a single parent, three child household. Needless to say, these changes were emotionally, financially and physically life altering.

Some years later, I found myself ready to re-enter the world of the living and I fell in love with a man, who kind and loving as he was, was not able to take on the responsibility of becoming a father figure to my children. As fate would have it, I also found myself pregnant again. I was suddenly thrust into a situation that forced me to consider my own health, the health and well being of my three children and the emotional and financial future of my family.

As a responsible mother, I chose to end my pregnancy, securing the emotional well being of my children and allowing my career, my caretaking and most importantly, my healing, to continue.

I am steadfast in my belief that the Kansas state constitution's protection of my right to choose whether to continue with a pregnancy has enabled me to provide the best future for my self and my children. Section 1 of our constitution, which protects my right to personal autonomy, including the ability to control my own body, assert bodily integrity and exercise self determination, is essential to the health and wellness of our state's residents.

Resolution HCR5019 is in direct opposition to this inalienable right to individual liberty, and I respectfully ask that you consider the long lasting impacts that removing this right from women like me might ultimately have upon our state.

Duly submitted for your consideration,

Shanna Shafer