

House Federal and State Affairs Committee

9:00 AM, Room 346-S

Testimony Opposing HCR 5003

Glen Armbruster

Friday, January 15, 2021

Dear Chairman Barker, Vice- Chairwoman Arnberger and Members of the Committee,

In 1972, I was serving in the US Navy and attending a school in Dam Neck, VA. My wife was pregnant with our second child, and we were looking forward to the day he would be born. This was before Roe v Wade, and it was also well before routine ultrasound diagnostics. We had no idea our baby, who we named Adam, was a boy nor could we have known he had "Potter's Syndrome." The nearest Navy hospital was in Portsmouth, so when the time came for my wife to deliver we went there. In the starkly Spartan waiting room, there were a half dozen or so women waiting to deliver. Our turn arrived, and the baby was delivered. But he made no sound. The medical team quickly shielded him from our view rushed him out of the delivery room. He lived approximately 3 minutes before he suffocated to death because his lungs were a solid mass unable to supply oxygen. With the umbilical cord removed, he only had minutes to live.

The ensuing several weeks were a nightmare. We were too poor to transport him back to Kansas for burial. Having to deal with things like the birth certificate and death certificate were emotionally draining. As I said, there was no ultrasound in those days, and no abortion, but time passed and I looked back on our experience. I couldn't help but think that if we had been warned by an ultrasound and abortion had been legal in those days, it would certainly have been the right option. It would have saved our heartache, but perhaps more importantly it would have saved our son the horrible experience of suffocation at birth. Aside from that, it was a very rough pregnancy that made me fear our marriage wouldn't survive another one. It was five years later when I finally agreed to try for another child.

So many aspects of my own experience in 1972 have convinced me that laws written to protect the lives of fetuses cannot possibly be reasonable in all the situations they end up regulating. Adam's life wasn't protected by any of the laws in existence in those times and wouldn't have been protected by currently proposed legislation. Adam's life was only made more miserable by the three minutes of suffocation he suffered.

No one wants to get an abortion, but circumstances force people to make very personal decisions about what needs to be done. Based on my own experience, I've never understood why late-term abortions are most likely to be regulated. By the time a pregnancy reaches the later terms, the parents have usually committed to the birth, but something catastrophic has changed. My guess is that the reason a person would want a late-term abortion is very often something never anticipated by the legislation.

I'm a Republican, which to me means that we should keep the government off the backs of the people. I've always thought it was the liberals who wanted regulate our lives but abortion seems be the one issue where conservatives want to regulate the lives of the people. I wish we could

take a moment to ask ourselves who we serve when we restrict the ability of our citizens to choose the right action in their own situation.