

**Project Rachel  
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**LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY**

To: Members of the Joint Committee of the Judiciary  
From: Marian J. Desrosiers, Diocesan Director of Project Rachel  
Re: Support for House Act 1670 “An Act Relative to a Woman’s Right to Know”  
Date: July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009

I am grateful to have this opportunity to testify on behalf of “A Woman’s Right to Know Act” – “Laura’s Law”.

Project Rachel is a National/International organization offering private and confidential services to women or men hurting because of a past abortion experience. Women who may have had an abortion, others who may have manipulated, encouraged, or helped someone to obtain one, and family members affected by the decision or even a professional involved as an abortion advocate or provider contact us. After more than twelve years of listening to hundreds and hundreds of women who have suffered deeply and profoundly because of their abortion experience, I felt compelled to testify today on their behalf.

Repeatedly, they have asked me, to help get the truth out. Their hope is to help prevent other women from having to experience the post-abortion agony that has haunted them for so many years. In order to live with their so-called “choice”, a “protective” wall of denial is established delaying their ability to deal with the truth and profound effects of the experience. Society tells them it was their “choice” and does not allow them an outlet to express deep feelings of guilt, grief, confusion, or anger which all lead to a sense of alienation and isolation. The average amount of time that will pass, before they contact our office, is seven to twelve years. Some women will call sooner, and some call 40 to 50 years after the abortion. The process can be most difficult, but once the initial call is placed, a major hurdle is taken down and they begin their journey to find hope, reconciliation and healing.

For many, this will be the first time they will feel safe in sharing their story. They will discover they are not alone. Feelings of remorse, pain, loss, despair and anger at self and others come pouring out. Discussion of sleepless nights, hearing babies cry in the dark, depression, profound sadness and constant reminders of the “birthday” never celebrated, haunts them. Some turn to alcohol or drugs to deaden the pain. Some will binge eat and purge, leading to anorexia in attempts to bury shame. Some will even attempt suicide. Many tears will flow and when the time is right for them, they express what they felt all along, deep within their hearts - **they lost a child**. Some will even share they sense the loss of a baby daughter or baby son.

After the abortion, some discover through media or educational materials, that it was never just a “blob of cells” or “some tissue”. No matter how early the abortion took place in the pregnancy, many women need to acknowledge and grieve their loss. Women who miscarry often grieve and share their loss with others, but the women who suffer the pain of abortion are often secluded in silence. They don’t know where to turn to share their feelings and ask unanswered questions, so they bury it all, deep within.

The House 1670 Bill would require the DPH to make information available to these women before they undergo the abortion procedure. Information on fetal development, ultrasound imaging, abortion risks, potential emotional or psychological risks would be made available to these women, if requested. Agencies ready to assist them, should they choose to continue the pregnancy or assist them after the abortion, would be made readily available.

Please take into consideration a “thread” which weaves itself throughout all of the stories that women have shared with me.

1. They felt they had “no choice” when they made the decision to end their pregnancies. A multitude and complex variety of reasons led them to this feeling. Driven by fear and/or depression, financial insecurities, pressure and/or lack of support from others, possible problems with the fetus, etc., all compound her ability to make a true choice. She **needs to decide** if she wants to access more information before what could be the most difficult decision in her life. Society has an obligation to afford her that opportunity and House 1670 would allow her this access, should she request it.
2. “Why didn’t anyone tell us the truth?” Truth about the abortion procedure, risks, post-abortion aftermath, fetal development information, ultrasound imaging, pregnancy support and post abortion support, is some of the information they were denied. It may very well have affected their decision, and we have a profound obligation, out of respect for women, to empower them with this information. Often, she is under intense pressure from the father, her parents or medical personnel to hurry and end the pregnancy. They find themselves in extreme distress signing forms they have not even had time to read, feeling numb and depersonalized. They hurry just to get through the procedure, never being encouraged or supported to take charge of their situation. Requiring abortion facilities to allow women a twenty-four hour waiting period will help to balance some of these pressures.

Women often discover later the medical, scientific and support information that they should have been given before they underwent the abortion. Many realize that abortion was coerced upon them and a “temporary solution” they would have never chosen had they be given full disclosure, support information and time. In the end, many find themselves left to confront the horror of what happened to them alone.

Please support House 1670 and help women to access all the information necessary to make an informed decision. Give women some protection against those who may have their own agendas.

Thank you.