



March 13, 2006

Chairman Morrison and members of the House Health and Human Services Committee:

We support S 528, a bill that provides statistical information about abortion. In an information-based society, it is imperative that those who provide policy decisions on such routinely-performed procedures such as abortion, know exactly upon whom the abortion is performed, why it is performed and the medical condition of the fetus.

Recent scientific findings are showing that the abortion procedure itself poses significant risks to the woman. Obviously the risk posed to a fetus at 22 weeks gestation is moot, but the state has a vested interest in knowing the reasons for terminating a pregnancy at this point of gestation. At 22 weeks, some children have lived outside the womb. Fetal anomaly and injury to the mother are the general reasons given; however, it would be helpful for future policy decisions to know what those conditions are. The mother's mental and physical state should be a matter of concern to policy-makers, particularly since the U.S. Supreme Court's *Doe v. Bolton* decision that gives the mother's "health" as license to perform an abortion at any stage of viability. The recent death of a young woman with Down's syndrome at the Tiller clinic shows that the mental state and physical state should be known for the mother's protection as well as for statistical reasons.

Recent reports have shown that Down's Syndrome babies are being aborted at alarming rates; causing some to raise concerns about the screening of fetuses for elimination if they don't pass the genetic test. Studies have also shown that some people would like to screen babies for gender preferences. In a world that is developing the capabilities of doing more and more prenatal testing, it is even more important that state policy makers be aware of the ethical ramifications of couples who have access to genetic information who might use it in a deleterious way. All of these things make it imperative that the state know exactly for what reason these late term abortions are being performed. Merely stating "health" or "fetal anomaly" is not enough; too many abuses are already occurring from eliminating a child with a cleft palate to a mother who has trepidations about her pregnancy qualifying as mental health.

We urge you to pass this legislation that would make sure that you have enough information with which to make good public policy decisions concerning abortion.

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