

March 2, 2016

Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for allowing me to speak on the proposed legislation commonly known as Simon's Law; withholding life sustaining treatment for persons under 18 years of age, patient or legal guardian consent.

Back in 2011 I testified on Parental Notification of an abortion in the House Federal and State affairs. I brought to that group a first hand experience that allowed them to see into the mind of a parent and how decisions made by legislation and people in the medical field affected the lives of families across the state of Kansas, both for good and bad. I hope to do the same today. I ask that you pardon the raw emotion that may surface as it is difficult for me to recount some of the events that happened in the past.

Our pastor has been giving a series of sermons on the Ten Commandments with each being the focus of a single message. Two weeks ago it was on the sixth commandment taken from Exodus 20: 13 "You will not murder." It is only four words long but is often considered to be one of the more important ones, if you believe they have relative value.

This proposed legislation strikes at the heart of this long honored belief by people of faith and indeed people of this state and all over the world. It is a belief that life is important and has utmost value.

There is no middle ground in the commandment, you either believe it or you don't. Do you believe you are superior to God and have the right to place another person's life in the balance of a life or death decision. If you choose to place a DNR in a medical file you are saying you are superior to God. There may be a number of highly skilled and educated people in this world, none with more wisdom than Solomon who spared a baby's life when it was contested by two women, but I doubt the saying of "practicing medicine" was said without a reason. Medical practice in particular is not an exact science. I know that from experience with what has happened in the lives of my children and that of a niece.

In the case of my daughter we were advised to abort her due to serious problems related to Rh factors and the toxins that resulted. The doctor told us it was the highest levels he had ever seen and would certainly cause my wife to die as a result. We didn't abort and both are alive today with the daughter being a very talented gymnast, pole vaulter, cheerleader at the state level in high school and college. She now teaches those at the schools in KS. Our decision overrode the doctors recommendation and you see the result.

A son with Chron's disease had several major flares while attending Baylor University. A call was received from a hospital telling us if we wanted to see our son alive it was imperative we get there immediately as he was on the brink of death. Why we were not notified earlier is another story. We got there and another doctor diagnosed the problem the others had missed. Today he is an entrepreneur in Kansas and doing well. Again the practice of medicine is only as good as the attending doctor. Not all are equal in abilities. The second doctor told me "To have Chron's disease is bad enough, but to screw up the way that doctor did is unacceptable. He will not be in our group long." A bold statement that shocked me to hear as most professional people will not disclose that type of information for fear of litigation.

A niece had a missing wall in the chamber of her heart which was found at seven months of age. It allowed the oxygenated blood to mix the the oxygen depleted blood before being pumped to the body. This caused problems as you might well imagine. As a patient of KU Medical Center doctors conferred with Dr. Michael DeBakey a renowned doctor and pioneer in heart surgery. He conferred with another doctor in South Africa before suggesting two options. The first would be a heart and lung transplant, the first in the United States at that age at that date. The second option was a stint between the heart and lung which had an expected survival rate of over 95% and considered much safer. The parents chose the latter. After a number of hours on the operating table she lost the fight for life. People are not all knowing in medical procedures and the wonderfully made bodies.

When KU wanted my brother to sign a medical release relieving them of any consequences he quietly looked up at them and said “You have nothing to worry about. Our parents taught us to do the best we could and accept the outcome. I trust you did your best.” With that he, his wife and I got up and left the hospital to begin the process of loosing their first born on her eighth month of life.

We are humans. We do not know what God has in store for us. We are not to think we are superior to Him. We are to trust Him and we are to obey what He says. In this case we are not to murder. No one should chose to end a life by placing a DNR in a medical file without the consent of a parent.

I understand you will question why I would even agree to let a parent or guardian to allow for a DNR to be used. They are the parent/guardian and are to responsible for raising and training up the child in the way that he/she is to go. That decision should be theirs alone or with the advice of a doctor. It should not be a decision made by someone in secret.

Thank you for your time and attention. I will answer questions you may have for me.

Respectfully submitted.

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