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SCR 1606 Proponent Testimony

House Federal and State Affairs Committee

March 7, 2019

Chairman Barker and members of the committee,

I am Jeanne Gawdun, Senior Lobbyist with Kansans for Life. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SCR 1606.

The reasoning behind a concurrent resolution condemning the enactment of the "Reproductive Health Act" by the state of New York can be summed up in the following quote:

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."- Martin Luther King Jr., Letter from the Birmingham Jail

Kansas citizens are pro-life and their answer to pregnant women in crisis has been to voluntarily staff over 50 pregnancy care centers across the state, empowering women with knowledge, support, and life-affirming options to abortion.

The state legislature has long reflected the pro-life will of the people by enacting laws that recognize not only the humanity of the unborn child, but also respect the innate bond between a mother and her unborn child.

In contrast to some of the provisions of New York's "Reproductive Health Act":

- Since 1969, Kansas has consistently relegated the role of abortion to doctors, not physician assistants, nurse practitioners or independent practice nurse midwives.
- In 2007, Kansas enacted Alexa's Law, allowing for additional criminal charges to be filed in recognition of the unborn child as a second victim in cases where he is injured or killed in the commission of a crime against his mother.
- In 2011, Kansas enacted the Pain-capable Unborn Child Protection Act, prohibiting abortions at 22 weeks gestation (20 weeks post-conception), based on the scientific evidence that unborn children feel pain.
- In 2013, Kansas enacted the Pro-life Protections Act, which includes the provision that the attending physician has the legal obligation to maintain the life and health of a child born alive during an abortion.

- In 2015, Kansas was the first state in the nation to enact the Unborn Child Protection from Dismemberment Act, prohibiting the brutal dismemberment of fully-formed, living unborn children.

The Dismemberment Abortion ban was sued by abortionists claiming that there is a "right to abortion" in the 1859 Kansas constitution, and is under injunction. This claim, and the passage of such a wide-sweeping law in New York, are the tactics abortion activists are using to ensure that abortion is "safely legal everywhere," in anticipation of the day that Roe v. Wade is overturned and the issue of abortion goes back to the states.

While we are horrified at what the governor and legislators in the state of New York have "celebrated," what we are facing in Kansas is the very real possibility that a majority of the seven unelected Supreme Court justices, with no real accountability to the people, will find a "right to abortion" in our state constitution, endangering countless pro-life laws enacted in accordance with the will of the people.

When and if such a ruling comes down, the only recourse for the citizens of Kansas is for their duly-elected legislators to pass a constitutional amendment declaring that there is no "right to abortion" in the Kansas Constitution, and put the vote before the people.

SCR 1606 reaffirms that Kansas, as a matter of public policy, values and seeks to protect all human life, and encourages New York and the rest of the nation, to do the same.

I respectfully ask that the committee pass the resolution out favorably.

Thank you and I stand for questions.