

Date of Testimony: Thursday, January 16, 2020

Bill Number: Bill HCR5019

Testimony by: Laura Guy

In Opposition Testimony: Written Only

Dear Chairman Barker and members of the House Federal and State Affairs Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to HCR5019.

I am an ordained pastor in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) denomination. My faith teaches me that all life is created by God and has inherent value. I am also a woman who miscarried a pregnancy in my 14<sup>th</sup> week, after an earlier sonogram revealed a healthy baby with fingers and toes. I experienced that loss as a devastating one, the loss of my child.

But when I was a teenager, my mother sat me down and told me her deepest secret – she had an abortion before it was legal. As she told me the story, so many years after it happened, I could still hear the fear in her voice. She was the first person in her family to go to college. Her fiancé died in a car crash and, in her grief, she drank too much at a party and had unprotected sex with a stranger. The unplanned pregnancy would have meant the end of her college studies. She knew she couldn't talk to her mother about it. She found someone willing to do an abortion but it was scary, unregulated and unsafe. I felt my mother's desperation and fear and I knew she did not make that decision lightly. Her story has stayed with me, even though she has been gone for 25 years now.

Every women I know who has made that decision has felt that same kind of desperation. It is never a decision that is made lightly. My faith teaches me to have compassion, to realize that women choose abortion only when there are no other options available to them. Some of these women are dealing with poverty, abusive relationships, health issues or other challenges. We don't need to punish them or stigmatize them, especially when the men who created the pregnancy face virtually no consequences at all.

We can work together to prevent unwanted pregnancies, to hope for a day when there are no more unwanted pregnancies, but until then, allow women and their doctors to make this most personal and intimate decision without government interference.

I ask that you oppose HCR5019.

Sincerely,

Rev. Laura Guy