

In Support of HF3194 - Informed Consent of an Ultrasound

March 20, 2018

Anne Taylor – Testimony

Thank you madam chair and members of the committee. I am a mother, wife, a writer and frequent testifier in support of bills protecting student data privacy. I'm also a licensed real estate assistant, grassroots organizer, part time back stock supervisor, the family cook, organizer and family planner including but not limited to music lessons, concerts, ballet practices that include both a soon to be a high school graduate and a kindergartener.

But before all of this - in my previous life - I lost two children to abortion along with my late husband – all by the age of thirty.

In 1998 I had my first abortion at a Planned Parenthood clinic in Tempe, Arizona where I was denied seeing the ultrasound image just moments before the actual abortion procedure took place.

After waiting nearly three hours for my scheduled abortion, when my name was finally called I was prepped as if I was going to have an annual pap smear. While the nurse began to spread a cool, clear gel on my abdomen to prep for the ultrasound, she then flipped on a monitor and began to move the probe across my lower belly. I asked the nurse, "Can you see it?" "See what?" said the nurse rather distant and not looking up. Timidly I asked, "Can I see the picture?" "No, I'm afraid not today" was this nurse's response to my request.

I was approximately ten weeks along in the pregnancy. Things began to happen quickly in the room and I wondered if something was wrong by the way the nurses were reacting upon entering the room. Before I knew it, one nurse was standing on each side of me by my head and a third stood at my feet. I was then instructed to place my feet in the stirrups and almost immediately, a door from inside the room was opened and out comes a man in full surgical attire. Suddenly I was startled by the sound of a machine that seemed as loud as a vacuum cleaner, or worse, a muffled chainsaw. Within minutes, the abortion procedure was complete.

This was my first brush with abortion: Unethical and coercive counsel, which ultimately resulted in a very traumatic experience.

When my life was more stable with a marriage and daughter - who was 2 ½ years old at the time - a difficult 3rd pregnancy led me to a medically-advised abortion by my OB-Gyn, only this time the abortion was at a hospital here in Minneapolis. Although this abortion was less traumatic, it was nonetheless something that was difficult on both an emotional and spiritual level.

In both abortion experiences, I was denied seeing an ultrasound image of my children. If I were to have dental surgery, an MRI, an x-ray, I am permitted to view those images if I wish. I am also able to view them later if I choose as those images also happen to be part of my personal medical record.

HF 3194 offers women the opportunity to accept or deny seeing an ultrasound image of the fetus any time prior to the performance of an abortion, and absolutely should be used as counsel prior to any surgical abortion procedure. Every patient has a right to oral consent and should not be coerced one way or another on the opportunity to either view or decline to view an active ultrasound image of an unborn child (or fetus).

I support this bill because I would not want another woman to be denied the right to view her ultrasound image the way I was – twice. Once at the hands of coercion. The second because I was already under anesthesia and given no opportunity to either view or decline to view my ultrasound image.

Please consider what I have had to say today regarding my abortion experiences and support HF 3194.