

January 16, 2020
Committee of Federal and State Affairs
Kansas House of Representatives

Testimony of Coree Unruh in Opposition of HCR 5019

Chairman Barker and Members of the Committee:

I appreciate the opportunity to present testimony for your hearing on HCR 5019, which proposes an amendment to our state constitution, to be put before voters in August of this year. As a native Kansan, born to native Kansans, and the mother of a native Kansan, I beg a few minutes of your time to explain why I oppose House Concurrent Resolution 5019.

I was raised by addicts, and we moved around a lot growing up, which limited my support network. In 2001 I was 22 years old, my parents were living out of state with their own demons, and I had dropped out of community college. I had a good job and was supporting myself, although I sometimes floated a check for a day or two before payday so I could eat. When I found out I was pregnant I was overwhelmed with the knowledge that I could not nurture another human being. It was taking all of my mental, emotional, and financial resources just to take care of myself. Although it was logistically difficult to terminate that pregnancy, it was an emotional relief. If I had not had the opportunity to have an abortion in Kansas, I know that I would have continued the cycle of poverty in my family.

In 2004 I was happily married, financially stable, and a homeowner when my daughter was born. Bringing her into the world and raising her to be a successful young woman is the most amazing thing I have ever done, and I perhaps spoil her, but I am blessed to have the resources to provide advantages for her.

From my personal experience, the difference between a tenable pregnancy, even an accidental one, and an unwanted pregnancy could not be more dramatic. No one likes abortion, but I do not believe we should force unwilling or unable women to carry pregnancies to term. I believe that a ban on legal abortions will not stop abortions from happening and will in fact endanger Kansas families medically and economically.

HCR 5019 asserts that the right to bodily autonomy for Kansans is “newly discovered,” and therefore, that our authority of our own bodies is not an inherent right granted to us by the Creator, for better or worse. This is either specifically targeted to repress the earning potential of women or a slippery slope to fewer freedoms. Our state constitution is a sacred document, in which we should take the utmost care to grant rights and protections, not to take rights away.

I look forward to the opportunity to elaborate and answer any questions in oral testimony on Tuesday, January 21st, 2020 in Topeka.

Sincerely,

Coree Unruh