

Members of the House Federal and State Affairs and Senate Judiciary Committees,

I implore you to vote no on HCR 5003 and protect Kansans' right to bodily autonomy. After last week's attempted coup at the nation's capital, I feel even more confident that it is necessary to intervene when an extremist few work to undermine the will of the majority. HCR 5003 is an additional example of an extreme, unpopular attempt to make decisions against the interest of the majority. This anti-abortion amendment does not reflect the wishes of Kansans -- indeed most Kansans, at 54%, support access to abortion according to a study done by Fox News in 2018.

I am one of those Kansans. I have lived in Kansas almost all my life, currently residing in Kansas City, Kansas. I am a social worker and a community organizer. These restrictive anti-abortion amendments remind me of my work as an advocate for domestic violence survivors. When I worked at a shelter, I fought alongside survivors of intimate partner violence who were seeking safety and justice. I sat with women who told stories of getting their teeth knocked out by their partner or finding that their abuser had drained their bank account. I heard of abusers who worked to sabotage their victims' employment, housing, or parenting. I also learned about the commonality of reproductive coercion.

In the field of domestic violence, we learn how abusers work to maintain power and control over their victim. Sometimes this power and control is maintained through emotional or physical violence, and reproductive coercion is another of these tools. Reproductive coercion is the act of controlling an individual's reproductive health choices, such as coercing a partner to have sex without protection, or denying access to birth control.

This anti-abortion amendment is state-sanctioned reproductive coercion. By undermining the Kansas Supreme Court ruling of 2019 and proposing this amendment, the Kansas legislature is attempting to assert control over the reproductive decisions of millions of Kansans without their consent. I know this amendment is not an abortion ban in its current iteration. I also know those that crafted this amendment have made it crystal clear that banning abortion outright is their ultimate goal, and the Kansas constitution is just the first obstacle in their way. They will not stop until abortion is illegal, putting millions of people who can become pregnant -- including me -- in bodily danger.

Please vote no on HCR 5003. Voting no means standing with your constituents -- who elected you to represent their voices. It means standing for reproductive freedom, so that people like me who can become pregnant have the ability to make decisions that are best for our families without the government getting in their way. Thank you for your time.

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