

North Dakota Human Services Committee,

My name is April Pearson. I am a mother and wife living in rural North Dakota. I have a background of working in the Center for Bio-Ethical Reform (CBR) in order to establish prenatal justice through education. Over the course of about 7 years, I educated thousands of people on the topic of abortion.

I am speaking in favor of HB1313.

I am a mother of several children. If I were to be washing dishes one day, and a little child approached me from behind, asking, "Mama, may I kill this?" I, as any other good parent, would automatically respond, "What is it?" Today I would like to ask "What is it?" of the abortion debate. After all, if the fetus is not a person, then there is no need to offer any protection to it. It is no more of a moral dilemma than pulling a tooth. But if the fetus is a person, then it is worthy of all protections we can offer.

In my work with CBR, I often heard comments such as, "I wouldn't personally have an abortion, but who am I to say that a 19-year-old poverty stricken alcoholic, should not have an abortion? It would be better if she aborted the fetus so it wouldn't live in poverty and possible abuse!"

To answer this, allow me to bring out Exhibit A. Meet my 9-week-old son, Cyrus. There is a photo of him at the end of my written testimony if you would like a better glance. Now, let us imagine that Cyrus is the child of that 19-year-old alcoholic. If she were to bring him up to you or I and say, "I'm so poor I can't even buy food! I'm being beaten by my boyfriend, and he even beats little Cyrus. Maybe I should just kill him." In such a situation, we all would rightfully and justly gasp in horror, and exclaim, "No! You cannot kill your child!"

And I ask you, what is the difference between Cyrus and the baby in the womb?

The Pro-Abortionist answers this question with the statement, "Cyrus is a baby! In the womb, there is just a fetus!"

So I ask you, "What is the difference between Cyrus and the fetus?" The differences are not many, actually. There are only four. I will address them quickly.

The first difference is size. The fetus is much smaller than Cyrus. But, as we all know, humans come in many sizes. Size does not determine personhood.

The second difference is level of development. The fetus is not nearly as developed as Cyrus. However, 9-week-old Cyrus is not as developed as you and I. Level of development does not determine personhood.

The third difference is environment. The fetus is in a vastly different environment than anyone else in this world. However, when Neil Armstrong walked on the moon, his environment was different, but he was no less valuable. Our environment does not determine our personhood.

The fourth difference is the degree of dependency. The fetus is much more dependent on his mother than Cyrus is. Yet, Cyrus is much more dependent on a caretaker than you and I are. Our degree of dependency does not determine our personhood.

These four differences are the only ones that separate a fetus from a born child. Since these are the only differences between the two, we can rest assured that we now have the answer for, "What is it?" None of these differences make him less of a person than a born child. None of these differences make the unborn child less valuable than a born child. In fact, the argument might be made that we place greater value on those persons who are smaller, less developed, and have greater dependency. We all know and agree that it is only right for us as a society to protect the more vulnerable persons among us; therefore, we ought also to extend that protection to the unborn child who very well may be the most vulnerable person among us.

Thank you. I stand for questions.

Exhibit A, Cyrus Pearson

