

Dear Members of the Legislative Assembly,

My name is Beverly Gorham. I served in the United States Air Force for 20 years, retiring as a Master Sergeant. I have spent my entire adult life traveling the world, witnessing the devastating effects of subjugating women. It weakens economies, destabilizes societies, and worsens public health outcomes. House Bill 1373 is another attempt to strip women of autonomy under the guise of protecting life, while ignoring the suffering it will cause.

Scientifically, fertilization does not mean viability. Most fertilized eggs never implant, and miscarriage is a natural biological process often caused by chromosomal abnormalities. Yet, this bill treats every fertilized egg as a person, potentially criminalizing women for medical events beyond their control. I know this pain firsthand! I suffered a traumatic miscarriage at 39 and, after finally giving birth at 40, was forced to have my uterus removed due to medical complications. The idea that lawmakers could dictate how women endure these experiences is beyond cruel.

HB 1373 will also force rape victims many of them children to carry pregnancies against their will. I was raped on September 19, 2004, shortly after joining the military. The horror of that day still haunts me over 20 years later. I live with PTSD, severe anxiety, and major depression. If I had been forced to bear my rapist's child, I cannot fathom how much worse my suffering would be. Forcing a victim to endure nine months of physical, emotional, and mental torment is not pro-life; it is state-sanctioned cruelty.

If America truly values life, it must support the women who give birth. If this country wants more babies, as Vice President JD Vance has said, then where is the guaranteed paid maternity leave? Where is the affordable healthcare, the mental health services, the childcare assistance? Instead, the same politicians who push forced birth policies refuse to enact protections that would actually help women and families.

This nation has become dangerously divided. Those in power have emboldened hatred, discrimination, and policies that target women's autonomy. Rather than uniting us, bills like HB 1373 further marginalize women and victimize the most vulnerable. America must do better. Our leaders must do better.

I strongly urge you to reject this bill.

Sincerely,

Beverly Gorham