

Testimony in Regard to Senate Bill 2150

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Good afternoon to the honorable Senate Judiciary Committee. My name is Lovita Scrimshaw and I am a physician in Minot, ND and also serve as the North Dakota State Director of the American Academy of Medical Ethics. I am testifying in regard to Senate Bill 2150 with a concern of one portion of the bill. I respectfully request that you render a "DO PASS" on this bill only if a change could be made to point #3b, page 2.

The section of concern I have states "An abortion to terminate a pregnancy that resulted from gross sexual imposition, sexual imposition, sexual abuse of a ward, or incest, as those offenses are defined in chapter 12.1-20, if the probable postfertilization age of the unborn child is six weeks or less." My question to the Committee is why should an innocent life be terminated for the crimes of another? This is certainly a difficult circumstance for the mother, but why should an innocent baby be killed for the crime of the father? Why not offer the mother assistance such as help with emotional support, counseling, provide her with additional resources in deciding the future for this child including the option of adoption, post-birth support, among other options?

I appreciate the bill's intent to protect life. This is apparent from the definition of "Human Being" starting at fertilization. This is medically correct. Life starts at fertilization. Since the Human Being starts at fertilization, then point #3b (as written in the current bill) would allow an abortion to kill the innocent Human Being. Supporting point #3b nullifies the bill's original intent to declare the human baby as a life worth protecting. Of note, I have spoken with a well-respected OB/GYN physician colleague in Minot who has many years of experience in the field of OB/GYN along with several other physicians in my area who are also of the opinion that we would fully support this bill if point #3b is not listed as an exception and therefore all of human life is valued and respected.

I applaud the definitions of medical emergency and the reasonable exceptions to the definition of abortion: "Save the life or preserve the health of the unborn child; (2) Remove a dead unborn child caused by spontaneous abortion; or (3) Treat a woman for an ectopic pregnancy."

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I am now happy to answer any questions.