



Chair Carpenter and members of the committee –

For the record, my name is Adam Schwend, and I am the Western Regional Director of State Affairs for Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America. We are a network of more than one million pro-life Americans nationwide, dedicated to ending abortion by electing national leaders and advocating for laws that save lives, with a special calling to promote pro-life women leaders.

It is my pleasure to testify in favor of HB 2653, which will extend child support obligations to cover “medical and pregnancy-related expenses” for an unborn child.

This bill sends both a practical and a philosophical message. Practically, child support is designed to ensure that both parents are providing material support for their children. Maternity care can be extremely expensive, particularly in cases when women have limited or no health insurance. Philosophically, this bill makes a clear point that unborn children deserve the same treatment as their born brothers and sisters and recognizes the biological reality that every child has a mother and father, regardless of parental involvement in their life.

It is also worth noting that 65% of abortions are a result of some level of coercion.¹ Far too often, that coercion is financial. Mothers are told that maternity costs will be astronomical, let alone expenses once the child is born. They are told that they simply can’t afford this pregnancy, without being told that there are resources available from pregnancy centers and nonprofits, the state, and yes – the baby’s father. This stress can push a pregnant mother, including one who truly wants to have her baby, to feel that abortion is her only “choice.” By adding medical and pregnancy related expenses to what can be considered for child support, some of the largest up-front costs can be shared, rather than shouldered entirely by the mother.

No matter our opinion on abortion, we should all agree that this bill is simply fair. It takes two people to make a baby. When those two people are not married and the costs of the child are split between the two parents, it is not fair to exclude pre-birth costs, which could be tens of thousands of dollars or more. As a father of five, I did not become a father as my first child exited the birth canal, but many months prior. This legislation recognizes this imbalance and addresses it.

Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America is laser-focused on serving women and saving babies. HB 2653 certainly does both. We encourage passage.

Thank you.

¹ “67% of women described their abortions as “accepted but inconsistent with their values and preferences” (43%) or “unwanted or coerced” (24%). Only 33% identified their abortions as wanted. 60% would have preferred to give birth if they had received either more emotional support or had more financial security.” <https://lozierinstitute.org/hidden-epidemic-nearly-70-of-abortions-are-coerced-unwanted-or-inconsistent-with-womens-preferences/>