

Testimony for Wednesday, March 8th, the Kansas Health and Human Services Committee:

Members of the Kansas House Health and Human Services Committee, and Chairwoman Rep. Brenda Landwehr,

I'm so honored and humbled to share my testimony that hopefully makes it harder to dismiss stories and people like me.

I speak in support of HB 2313, the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act. My name is Sarah Zagorski, and I am an abortion survivor.

In January of 1990, my birth mother, a Hispanic immigrant from Honduras sought the help of an infamous New Orleans abortion physician named Dr. Okpalobi. He delivered me in an induction abortion at 26-weeks, breech, and when I was born, I was not breathing.

He advised my mother, who was a vulnerable broken woman with seven children at home at the time, to let me die on the table. He said I would be a mental vegetable incapable of having a normal life.

Thankfully, in a brave decision, my birth mother demanded I receive medical care immediately. At that time, Dr. Okpalobi was under review by the Louisiana Board of Medical Examiners for performing a botched abortion a year prior, in 1989, making my mom's threat of a lawsuit persuasive.

Only then did the abortion physician send me to Children's Hospital in New Orleans where I survived.

The Born-Alive Infants Protection Act is common-sense legislation and it's a shame, even incomprehensible, that any person would oppose it.

Thankfully though, through the work of many common-sense citizens in Kansas you have the opportunity to consider it today. This legislation transcends the abortion debate. To be clear, leaving a baby to die following a barbaric traumatic abortion is infanticide.

Abortion survivors often hear that this occurrence is rare, and I can assure you it is not, but the question is even if it protects only one single baby from death isn't that important? Was my life worthy of protection from death? These are the questions I have for all of you.

The responsibility should not have been on my birth mother to save my life. Vulnerable women shouldn't carry the weight of that. The onus, the burden, should have been on the physician who went to medical school.

But without my mother's bravery, I'd be dead. Another common reality with women who abort is that over 60% face coercion during their abortion decision from partners, friends and loved ones - and of course, in my story and many others, they face coercion from abortion physicians who wield their power in destructive ways.

Please vote in favor of HB 2313 to protect and save lives like mine.

Thank you,

Sarah Zagorski