

Mary Fox
Senate Judiciary Committee
HB 730
8 a.m. Room 303
March 16, 2005

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Mary Fox. I am a resident of Deer Lodge, Montana. I come here today as a private citizen, and a proponent of HB 730. My background includes being employed as a teacher in various capacities for the last thirty years. I am one of thirteen children, whose mother died when I was fifteen years old. I am also, sadly to say one of the millions of women who choose under duress to kill my child in 1975, when I was a young and naïve twenty-six year old college student in my last year of student teaching.

My family growing up was a happy one. But with the death of my mother from cancer, and children ranging in age from 17 years old to 18 months, our family was thrown into an emotional tailspin. My good father that he was, turned more often to drinking for solace. Yet we were not physically abused children. My father did the best he could and despite some difficulties regarding his drinking, he remarried after a few years, and the stability of the family grew. We remain a family of warmth and love towards each other today. I am also a happily married wife and stepmother for twenty-two years.

House Bill 730 is not about abortion per se. This bill goes to the heart of the parents' rights and obligations to lovingly raise their children as they see fit and to hand on to their children the moral values and examples of a family formed in love. This bill is about the government usurping the rights of the parents. It is challenging the parents' abilities to judge and make decisions about an irreversible choice.

Even the law recognizes the inability of children under 18 years of age to engage in various activities or decisions. Some of which include; getting a driver's license, voting, legal consent to sex, drinking alcoholic beverages, getting married, buying a gun, joining the military, getting body piercing or using a tanning booth. They can however, get an abortion.

My own fear, shame and embarrassment helped keep me from seeking the help of my parents. Yet the after affects and fall-out of procuring an abortion in the midst of turmoil and through the misguided advice of non-family members, created a scarring chasm that only God, my Church and family members has healed.

What is it about abortion? Why does such a life-changing decision require such minimal legal affirmation, devoid of family influence and guidance? How many people be they young or old make life-changing decisions solely on their own? Even planning, discussing and organizing for a vacation is considered reasonable and prudent. Do the female adolescents and women of this state deserve less guidance and care when it comes to aborting another human being? In closing, I ask that you honestly consider the importance of the passage of HB 730. Thank you.

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