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March 3, 2004

Senate Commerce Science Subcommittee Hearing “Examining the Impact of Abortion on Women”

Opening Statement

Thank you all for coming here today.

I have convened this subcommittee hearing today in order to better understand the science on the physical and psychological health consequences on women of induced abortions—as well as getting a better picture of the quantity and quality of medical data that is available on the impact an abortion has on the woman having an abortion.

This hearing is about the mom. What impact does an abortion have on her?

Whether one is pro-life or pro-choice, we should know the health consequences of abortion for women.

Since the *Roe v. Wade* decision 31-years ago this past January, it is estimated that at least 40 million abortions have taken place in the United States. Yet, there are few reporting requirements for this particular procedure.

The lack of information on the medical impact of abortion on the woman is quite puzzling when compared to other medical procedures, such as hysterectomies, heart and kidney transplant surgeries, and even plastic surgery.

We know in great detail the positive and negative long-term effects of procedures from heart surgery to plastic surgery, and yet know so little about the long-term effects of abortion.

In 1973 when the Court ruled on *Roe v. Wade*, we had no way of knowing the long-term physical and psychological health consequences of abortion. Common sense and health sense should have dictated that the long-term impact of abortion on women would have been chronicled from the very beginning of the post-*Roe* era. It has not. There is a lack of research data on this subject.

Whether we agree or disagree on the sanctity of the child’s life growing in her mother’s womb, we all agree on the sanctity of the mother’s life, so we all should want to know how abortion impacts the mother. Surely we would want to know the therapeutic or deleterious consequences of abortion.

Today, we will hear from two panels. Our first panel of witnesses will discuss their personal experience with abortion and with counseling other women who have had abortions. I would like our second panel of medical professionals to share what they have found regarding induced-abortions—specifically what do we know from observable fact about the long-term health impact of abortion on women; and also how is the quantity and quality of information that is available on the long-term health impact of abortion on women.

With that, I turn to the first panel of witnesses for their opening statements.