

February 6, 2019

My name is Patricia Crocker and I reside in Essex Junction, Vermont, with my Husband, Roger, and two children, Bryant, 23 years old, and Caleb, 16 years old. When my Husband and I moved to Vermont from New Jersey in 1989, we were impressed with the Vermont values of hard work and love for children and families. As a Pediatric Occupational Therapist, I was impressed with how Vermont valued and protected vulnerable children and adults, especially those who could not speak for themselves. After moving to Vermont, my Husband and I gave birth to our oldest child. After having multiple miscarriages afterwards, and being discouraged by the high cost of adoption, we went on to foster many children. We adopted our youngest son from foster care. So, between my personal and professional life, I have spent a good part of my adult years loving, supporting, and advocating for vulnerable individuals, especially those without a voice. I have recognized these individuals as persons with human dignity. When I worked in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at the University of Vermont Medical Center, I held premature babies as young as 23 weeks gestational age gently in the palm of my hand and watched them fight courageously for their lives. I have had the profound experience of seeing several of these same premature babies grow, mature, and become productive adults who love and are loved, and contribute to the fabric of Vermont. Because of my experiences, I am enraged by the devaluing and dehumanizing I am seeing with more regularity by the laws and lawmakers in this state. I am pro-life and feel that life starts at conception.

The topic of abortion continues to be a controversial subject ever since the passage of Roe v. Wade in 1973. This controversy is such because of the competing welfare of the unborn baby and Mother in the first trimester. Because of these competing rights, I know good people who support abortion in the first trimester. However, these same people are appalled by the current VT law which places no restriction of when and how abortions can be performed. H.57 specifically states that the unborn child has no rights, even up to the day he/she is born. This essentially states that the unborn baby is not a person. This denial of "Personhood" eerily strikes me as similar to the arguments and statements made supporting slavery. This same law also removes the protections of the unborn baby for parents who choose to have that baby. This essentially causes a contrary situation where people who claim to be "pro-choice" remove the choice of others, such as in the case of Patricia Blair who had her choice removed from her when her pre-born babies were killed at 6 months gestational age when a person driving high on drugs collided with her vehicle. She received no justice for the death of her two precious babies because the offender got off with minor charges. This case haunts me to this day. What about other situations where the Mother experiences domestic violence resulting in the injury or death of her unborn baby whom she has chosen to carry to term? She and her baby will have no protections.

People supporting H.57 claim that it protects Women's Health. According to H.57, abortions can be performed by people other than doctors, and facilities do not need to be licensed. It protects anyone performing abortions from being legally responsible for harm. How does this protect women? If a woman is injured during an abortion, what recourse does she have?

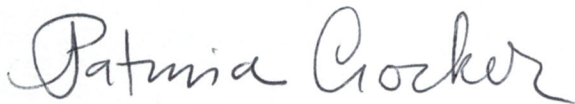
Ob/GYN Specialists have repeatedly said that there is no reason for aborting babies after the first Trimester because these babies can be delivered and are able to survive outside the womb. In fact, babies in the third Trimester, whether aborted or not, must be delivered either vaginally or by C-Section. Why kill the baby? These babies could be delivered and given up for adoption if the Mother decides not

to keep the baby. Why do babies who survive an abortion not have the right to medical treatment? I find these practices ghoulish, even evil.

Lastly, proponents of H.57 may argue that if the baby is allowed to survive, their quality of life would be compromised or that there would be no one to take care of them. Beyond my reaction of the audacity of people claiming to be able to measure the worth of another human being, I have a true story to tell that proves this as very wrong. I am 58 years old and my husband is 59 years old. Back when I was 45 and my Husband was 46, I saw an urgent Facebook post saying that there was a young woman who just found out that her unborn child had Down Syndrome. She was planning to have an abortion in the next few days unless someone was willing to adopt this child. My Husband and I were past the "Baby Parenting days". However, my conscience would not allow me to sit back, so I discussed with my Husband and children and decided that if there was no one else coming forward that we would be willing to love and adopt this child. I sent an e-mail to the contact person explaining our situation. Within the next few hours, I received a response back stating not to worry because they had already gotten 1500 responses! I truly believe that there is no such thing as an "unwanted child."

In closing, I ask that you not support H.57. It is legally unsound and puts a stain on the reputation of this great state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia Crocker". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid, with a large, stylized 'P' and 'C'.

Patricia Crocker

15 Joseph Lane

Essex Junction, VT 05452