

**TESTIMONY REGARDING HB 636 (Hoffman et al)**

**"Provides requirements for content and delivery of information regarding abortion in certain medical settings and revises criteria for voluntary and informed consent to an abortion"**

**Senate Health & Welfare Committee, June 1, 2011**

Good morning, Madam Chairman and Members of the Committee!

My name is Dr. W. A. Krotoski. I am a physician and retired medical scientist, with M.D., Ph.D. and Master of Public Health credentials, living in Louisiana since 1974, and in Baton Rouge since 1982. I am President of, and represent *The Hippocratic Resource*, a Louisiana-wide organization of physicians, dentists, nurses, scientists and other health professionals who have committed to promoting the life-respecting principles of the Hippocratic Oath and objective truth in Medicine. My active career included 26 years with the U.S. Public Health Service, with 21 years of adjunct teaching at both Tulane and LSU Schools of Medicine and Public Health, as well as their Graduate Schools. Currently, I continue to serve on the research ethics board of Baton Rouge General Medical Center; and have published in *The Linacre Quarterly*, a journal devoted to the philosophy and ethics of medical practice, in addition to numerous other authorships. I mention all this solely to serve as a background for my comments on Representative Hoffman's HB 636, to provide for adequate signage and dissemination of information regarding abortion in the context of informed consent.

During the hearing on this bill before the House Health and Welfare Committee several weeks ago, a number of allegations were made by its opponents [Planned Parenthood], and, in anticipation, I would like to respond to some of these in advance.

First, it must be stated that the vast majority of physicians, object strongly to abortion, based on their medical training in embryology and human development, and, for those taking it, on the Hippocratic Oath. This objection is based on the clear and scientifically unchallengeable recognition that abortion at *any* stage of pregnancy takes a human life, and that abortionists are almost universally shunned by the *bona fide* medical profession, based on that fact.

Second, it was said that Rep. Hoffman's bill stands between a woman and her doctor. The fact is that most medically licensed practitioners of abortion see a woman barely once, frequently not before when she has already been prepped for the procedure. This is hardly a normal doctor-patient relationship! The repulsive case of Philadelphia-licensed abortionist Kermit Gosnell, who for many years performed abortions on women under worse-than-veterinary conditions – and who worked regularly at Baton Rouge's Delta abortion facility – simply underlines that fact!

Third, it was said that the signage required by this Bill, and its placement, are somehow demeaning or condescending to a woman. To insist that a woman must not be forced or coerced to have an abortion, and to be notified of that fact, is hardly condescending or demeaning, particularly for young women. It is only part of that all-important fully informed consent, which is a required hallmark of any *bona fide* medical practice. Furthermore, the fact is that many women feel pressured or are frankly coerced to have an abortion by their families and/or their boyfriends, especially when young, or even by their husbands. Given that an innocent human life is at stake, a woman must be freed from such coercion in making a decision that has major consequences for her physical and mental health. Regrets after abortion are common, frequently profound, especially on anniversary dates, and can be life-long. It is no accident that depression, including post-abortion suicide, occurs at greater rates than in the normal population. One well-controlled study showed that women having an abortion are between six and seven times as likely to attempt suicide as socially and economically matched women who had *not* had one.

In summary, just as it is in the domain of departments of public safety to warn the public of criminal behavior or scam activities, or departments of public health to warn us of health risks due to infectious diseases, faulty nutrition, or bad personal health habits, so it is only good policy to warn women of their rights in matters of abortion, particularly when the record shows that those rights are frequently compromised by practitioners' bad behavior.

Please support Representative Hoffman's bill, and thank you for your attention!

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