

Testimony of Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life on H.F. 1, the PRO Act

January 10, 2023

Members of the House Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony in opposition to H.F. 1, the PRO Act.

Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life (MCCL) works to defend the lives of, among others, the innocent victims of abortion. The PRO Act would lead to more such victims, both unborn babies and their mothers. That's because late abortions, which the bill encourages, are the most dangerous medically to women.

Subdivision 3 of the bill gives every individual a "fundamental right" to all reproductive health care, including abortion. Since this right is "fundamental," it wouldn't allow any legal protection for any unborn baby at any stage until birth, a law so extreme it's only found in 7 countries in the world, among them China and North Korea.

The choice of the word "individual" at the beginning of Subd. 3 is also concerning. Giving every "individual" this right means it applies to minors: No parent would have the right to be informed if their minor daughter is seeking or undergoing an abortion. Parental notification on abortion was already overturned in last summer's *Doe v. Minnesota* ruling, but the PRO Act would statutorily deny parents this right.

What happens to a baby in a late abortion?

The baby feels excruciating pain. Debate in the medical community ranges from unborn babies being able to possibly feel pain as early as 8 1/2 weeks, to about 20 weeks. The main source that abortion advocates previously quoted, saying that unborn babies couldn't feel pain until 24 weeks (Derbyshire), now says he believes they feel pain at 12 weeks. So in any late-term abortion, an unborn baby would feel unbearable pain, *perhaps more* than a born person would if dismembered, burned with chemicals, or had a needle stuck through the torso into their heart, the three most common methods of late abortion.

At a certain stage, an unborn child's brain has not developed the pain-modulating function that, in a born person, briefly lessens pain after it has begun. This works, for example, to enable us to pull our hand away from a fire or retreat from some other source of pain. That portion of the brain is not developed in an unborn human child until a certain point, so he or she is likely to feel the highest level of excruciating pain in an abortion.

MCCL supports an amendment to ensure that the bill can't be used to allow partial-birth abortions.

In a partial-birth abortion, a doctor induces delivery, and as the baby is being delivered, grasps the baby with a Sofer clamp (which itself is painful, as the clamp has serrated teeth), turns the baby to breach delivery, and with the baby's legs and torso outside the woman's body but with the head still inside the mother, the abortionist punctures the base of the skull of the baby and inserts a suction catheter to draw out the contents of the baby's skull, which allows the doctor to easily crush the head with a forceps and complete delivery of the now-dead baby. Leaving the head within the mother's body while completing the procedure allows the fiction that this is an abortion, and not infanticide. Since 2007, this procedure has been illegal under federal law, but we need state protection against partial-birth abortion in Minnesota, since the U.S. House passed a bill similar to Minnesota's PRO Act last year, which could have once again made partial-birth abortion legal.

A compassionate society would do none of the things mentioned in this letter. It would care about both the unborn baby and her mother. We hope all committee members will see that we are linked to all humanity in caring and compassion, and vote to reject this violent destruction of our fellow human beings.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to testify.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Catherine R. Blaeser". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Catherine R. Blaeser
Co-Executive Director
Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life