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TESTIMONY

In opposition to SB 398

Senate Committee on Health, Human Services, Insurance and Job Creation

February 27, 2008

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I am Barbara Lyons, Executive Director of Wisconsin Right to Life. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and committee members, for the privilege of testifying in *opposition* to SB 398.

Abortion is a tragic act that has failed miserably in our state and country. Viewed back in 1973 as a panacea for a myriad of social ills, legal abortion throughout the full nine months of pregnancy has solved none of them. Women are harmed, fathers have no say in the destruction of their children, marriages and families are more unstable, and child abuse and neglect have increased dramatically over the past 35 years. The most egregious result -- we have 50 million dead who were never given a chance at life.

Technology has irrevocably answered what seven U.S. Supreme Court Justices could not divine back in 1973 – the question of when human life begins. We now know beyond a shadow of a doubt, through the beauty of ultrasound and the advent of in vitro fertilization, that every unborn child is a unique, living member of the human family at the time of fertilization. To say otherwise is to deny reality. To say it doesn't matter means that any vulnerable human life can be subject to destruction for the rationale of the day.

Section 940.04 of the Wisconsin statutes originated 150 years ago. This law, which prohibits the killing of unborn children, says a lot about our state and the concern we have for the welfare of human beings, including those who live in the mother's womb. It is as important to keep this law now as it was at its origin.

It is equally important to be concerned about the welfare of women. That is why s. 940.13 was enacted in 1985 – to ensure that women are not prosecuted or penalized by fine or imprisonment for having procured an abortion. Wisconsin Right to Life spearheaded the creation of s. 940.13 which negates the impact of s. 904.04 (3) and (4). It is unconscionable for the promoters of SB 398 to continuously claim that women will go to prison unless s. 940.04 is repealed because it is blatantly false.

50 million legal abortions have been performed in our country since 1973. Statistics reveal that 36% are performed on African-American women, a grossly disproportionate number to this ethnic group's population as 13% of Americans. Roughly 18 million African-American babies have been destroyed by abortion.

In Wisconsin, the number of abortions performed since 1974 is over 490,000. Imagine -- 490,000 of our Wisconsin family who were never given a chance. At 24% of Wisconsin abortions performed, over 117,000 African-American babies are not with us.

In acts of sheer discrimination, babies with disabilities, especially those with Down syndrome, are destroyed in large numbers, simply because they are not perfect and need more of our care.

Since 48% of abortions are repeats, a woman who aborts has already had one, two, or perhaps five previous abortions. These numbers leave no doubt that abortion is being used as a means of birth control.

More women are reporting that their abortions are coerced by threat or intimidation. Science tells us that babies experience significant pain from abortion, especially at 20 weeks or beyond.

And now, proponents of abortion who are backing SB 398 say it isn't enough. We need to continue this scourge on the Wisconsin landscape once *Roe v. Wade* is overturned by repealing s. 940.04.

For the sake of humanity, decency, and human rights, Wisconsin Right to Life urges you to reject SB 398. Let's turn the page and remain a state that believes in the hope and promise of the future by allowing everyone to have a chance to live. Thank you.