

My name is Hallie Wiertzema. I am a wife, a mother, and a nurse from Richland County and I am testifying in opposition to Senate Bill 398. I am in favor of preserving Statute 940.04 in Wisconsin's Law and I'll tell you why.

The ways that the issue of abortion has affected me are multifaceted, much like that of a diamond. I grew up in a loving home always aware that I was adopted. Mom and Dad told me often I was special-because they picked me. I experienced a very normal childhood, filled with more positive experiences than any child could imagine.

In April 1999, my parents drove with me to meet my biological parents. It was a wonderful reunion and there has been continued relationship. Families on both sides have embraced me and included me in many ways, like, weddings, holiday gatherings, birthday parties and family reunions.

In May 1999, the State Department released my impounded Birth Certificate. It was the reading of that document that has changed my life's focus and desires. The story spoke of a teenage girl who had gone to her family doctor to get an abortion. Her father had sent her away and told her not to come home until she had an abortion.

The doctor was kind and wanted to help so he looked at getting a plane ticket to New York to have an abortion there. But, a quick ultrasound check showed the baby was too far developed to abort so that doctor took \$1600 out of his own personal money to give her food and a place to live. He delivered that baby and had the baby placed for adoption. And that baby was me.

It's very humbling to read an account of your life, especially of your beginning and realize that you almost weren't here. I have

met the nurse who delivered me and also have been in contact with the Doctor who ultimately saved my life.

This leads me to facet two on my diamond.

My parents encouraged me to WAIT to experience sex within marriage. I held this deep conviction, as well, especially as I watched two of my high school friends experience childbirth in their freshman year. Some of my friends talked about STD's they had gotten, while others suffered the aftereffects of choosing to abort their babies. I was well on my way to achieving my goals and avoiding these issues.

Two weeks away from my High School graduation I attended a post-prom party. You see, my date and I were elected the King and Queen the year before. So, we attended the prom the next year to crown the new King and Queen. Back at the post-prom party, there was a lot of fun, food, friends, and other poor choices that enabled my virginity to be taken from me in a date-rape situation.

I've often heard that abortion is the "the compassionate choice" in cases of rape or incest. I disagree with that, let me tell you why.

When I was nineteen and attending UW-Madison I faced an unintended pregnancy. My boyfriend said he would support whatever decision I made. Pursuing a career at the time, I thought it would best for everybody involved if I just had an abortion. Ultimately, that's what we chose and I can honestly say that it was the worst decision I've ever made.

I'm 36 today and I would have a 17 year old child if I had not made a decision based out of fear and selfishness. Many times people say, "yes, but if you were raped then abortion would be O.K." Or, "it would be just too difficult to have the child around as a reminder of that rape. Abortion would be acceptable then." I believe the pain of being raped is much less than the pain of

abortion because you don't have a choice in the matter. Whereas, the emotional impact of having an abortion is greater because you, yourself, make a choice to kill your baby. In my experience, the physical pain of an abortion is much greater than that of rape. Abortion is NOT a painless procedure.

This leads me to facet three on my diamond. Prior to my abortion, I was a pretty motivated person on my way toward a career in nursing and hospital management. I enjoyed long distance running and my friendships. I basically enjoyed my life!!

After my abortion, I lost sight of my goals. Symptoms of anxiety, depression, thoughts of ending my life, continuous guilt, sleeplessness, lack of motivation, and profound sadness, clouded in. Opponents may disagree that Post Abortion Syndrome in Women exists. But I ask, how is it that a person could be so contented, motivated, and happy with the first 19 years of their life, and with a 20 minute abortion procedure have feelings so completely opposite for the next 10 years...

I believe the emotional impact of having an abortion is far-reaching. Facet four on my diamond is the study I went through 6 years ago to deal with the issues and overcome Post-abortion syndrome. The study was called Forgiven and Set Free and it did just that!! I have led other women through the study and their tears and remorse are replaced with a joy for living again. My past boyfriend said there hasn't been a day that goes by where he doesn't think about that baby and what life could've been like. Men, also, are affected by abortion.

This leads me to conclude with facet five on my diamond. I am grateful to the Doctor who courageously stood up and gave me the Right to Life, Freedom and the Pursuit of Happiness. Where is our nation headed as 48 million people have been denied these basic rights according to our Constitution. How long will we have to

wait for our leaders to step up and say abortion practices need to stop??

What is the value of a life?? Ask my husband of nearly 3 years; ask my family and friends, ask my patient after I've adjusted his ventilator settings, ask the young people I get to talk with about Saving themselves for marriage, ask the 1 in 4 women you pass by in public who've just had an abortion.

I'm so glad that Doctor stepped up and gave me the opportunity to live and experience the love of my husband and children; the kisses of my 2 year old and his voice echoing mama.

Members of this committee, I hope that you remember my stories because, like me, it may well be YOUR daughter, sister-in-law, aunt, wife, or grandma whom abortion touches. I appreciate your vote against Senate Bill 398 and to SAVE s. 940.04 Thank-you!!