

Testimony of Erin Peterson on AB 427 on 9/13/07

My name is Erin Peterson. I am unable to be here in person today, however I want to share my personal testimony to convey this message to the committee - "I support Assembly Bill 427, the Coercive Abortion Prevention Act."

Beginning with a bit of personal background, I started drinking when I was 13 years old. I saw many adults around me drinking, laughing, and having a grand time. I was immature and quite shy and the alcohol loosened me to to be myself – to let my true feelings come out. I believe that this was the beginning of the end for me. I liked the high and it brought me out of my shell. It gave me a boldness that I otherwise did not possess. As you can well imagine, there were plenty of other activities that went along with drinking. There was smoking, many kinds of drugs, and plenty of sexual activity. At the young age of 15 I suspected I might be pregnant and went to my family physician for confirmation. I was indeed pregnant. I received no counsel from the physician; I was left on my own to make a life long, life altering decision between keeping this baby and having an abortion. My immediate reaction was to have an abortion. I felt alone and without help, hope, or support. I was ashamed and afraid. As I entered the abortion clinic I felt cold and numb. I was given an exam and told that I was not as far along as they had expected; and was told that this was good news for me because the cost would be reduced. Apprehensive yet determined to "fix" this "problem" the nurse began to prepare me for the procedure. I changed into a gown, was laid on a table with wheels, and given what was called a "twilight" anesthesia. As my body began to relax, I was suddenly very afraid and began telling the nurse that I didn't want to go through with it. I pleaded with her to stop the procedure. I specifically remember saying "please, stop, I don't want to do this". The words that came next from the lips of the nurse were one of the most offensive, enormous lies I have ever been told. "Don't worry, everything will be just fine." For me and thousands of women just like me, everything was not ok. I was moved into a room with several other crying distant women. It seemed surreal. I felt as if this could not possibly be happening. I suffered from loneliness, depression, and suicidal thoughts for the next several years. I remain wounded in my core because my situation is irreversible. I will always wonder what could have been had I been taken seriously while pleading with the nurse to "please stop, I don't want to go through with this". Through counsel and study and personal faith, I've been able to grow stronger and more confident as a person; however there are life long consequences because truly I was not given the last minute opportunity to choose another path. In my current work with others who are faced with the choice of deciding to keep or abort their children, I urge them to find their inner strength, and their voice, and to stand firm in their decision. In closing, I urge you to vote in favor of AB 427, so that young girls will not have to go through the emotional pain and regret that so many women in our nation are living with today.

Thank you for hearing my testimony,

Erin Peterson