

January 31, 2008

Members of the Assembly Committee on Judiciary and Ethics:

Please accept my written testimony in support of Assembly Bill 710, the Wisconsin Ban on Partial Birth Abortion, as I am unable to travel to Madison today. I am a practicing obstetrician gynecologist in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This particularly gruesome method of abortion has no role in the practice of medicine. It has never been systematically studied, nor ever proven to be safe. In fact the procedure itself involves great risk of harm to the mother because of the need to dilate the cervix manually to such a degree to deliver the baby intact. This can lead to miscarriage and preterm delivery in future pregnancies. The process of using a sharp scissors to sever the baby's spine involves blindly inserting the scissors into the uterus and potentially causing a life threatening maternal hemorrhage.

The procedure is used in advanced gestations to guarantee a live baby is not delivered. I can think of no instance when this procedure would be required to deliver a fetus dead or alive. In fact, beyond 20 weeks gestation the safest procedure for delivery is the medical induction of labor. The D&X procedure would never be used in an emergency because the dilatation of the cervix requires two days. If a mother's life is in danger beyond 20 weeks but before viability, one would begin a medical induction or in dire emergency perform a hysterotomy, (delivery of the baby operatively similar to cesarean section). Neither an AMA Task force nor the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology select panel could identify any situation that would require an intact D&X, (partial birth abortion).

In light of the recent Supreme Court decision to uphold the federal partial birth abortion ban, I urge you to ban this procedure from practice here in the state of Wisconsin.

Respectfully,

Julie A. Mickelson, MD