

Submitter: Lois Anderson  
On Behalf Of: Oregon Right to Life Updated  
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules  
Measure: SJR33

Chair Lieber, Vice-Chair Knopp and members of this Committee, my name is Lois Anderson and I am the Executive Director of Oregon Right to Life. I am here to ask you to oppose SJR 33.

50 years ago, advocates for abortion told us that our laws prohibiting abortion were holding back women. They told us that a woman couldn't be equal unless she could choose to end the life of a baby developing in her womb. They told us that when they legalized abortion, our society would become a more just, more humane place for all of our citizens. They said that more mothers would be able to take care of their children who were born and that we would have more resources to care for the most vulnerable people in our society: the poor, the elderly and the disabled.

Now 50 years on, we know that this was all a lie. Our society is less just, not more. Our language is coarser, our public debate divisive and crass. Violence is more prevalent on our streets and in our schools. Instead of greater care for the most vulnerable in our communities, we see the opposite.

It is estimated that 60-90% of babies diagnosed with Down's syndrome die from abortion in the U.S., compared to 18% of all pregnancies ending in abortion. We have more people with mental illness suffering and dying on our streets. Abortion has not solved society's problems. Nothing that abortion advocates promised 50 years ago has actually come to fruition, except that millions of developing babies have been killed through legal abortion.

But not only do we know that abortion has not and cannot solve society's social ills. Now we know that each child developing in her mother's womb is a distinct human being. We know because all of us have seen the ultrasounds that were not available 50 years ago. We have seen images of babies sucking their thumbs, yawning and stretching, all in the months before birth. And...we know that each baby has a purpose and a future that is not ours to determine. But she does not have the right to the protection of her own life - a protection that each of us in this room enjoys.

So this bill, SJR 33, which purports to enshrine equal rights under the law for all people in Oregon, will actually do the opposite. If adopted by the people of Oregon as its advocates hope, it will codify the legal discrimination that exists against developing babies under the guise of women's rights. Instead of ensuring equality under the law, it will ensure inequality of the most egregious kind. It will continue to ensure that thousands of babies, the most vulnerable people in our society, will die. It will ensure

that no law will protect them.

And it may have many unintended consequences. Today under Oregon's criminal code, murder, strangulation, and assault all include enhanced penalties if the victim is pregnant. This makes sense as we all know that women are more vulnerable when they are pregnant and we understand that there is a possible second victim of violence against a mother. But if SJR 33 becomes law, a criminal defendant could, and likely will, argue that this is an abridgment of their equal rights by a law that discriminates based on pregnancy. SJR 33 makes no provision if that discrimination based on pregnancy is for good reason, as is the case with enhanced penalties for criminal violence.

For these reasons, I ask that you stand up for true equality under the law for both developing babies and their mothers, prevent the unintended negative consequences to victims of crime that this bill may create, and vote to oppose SJR 33. Thank you.