

## Reflection on HB23-1119 – Abolishing Abortion in Colorado



My name is Tom Perille. I am a physician and President of Democrats for Life of Colorado. I am here to share my thoughts on HB23- 1119.

This is not the right language or the right time to pass an abortion restriction in Colorado. We have to have a much longer and more respectful dialogue about abortion before that changes. Thankfully, the Dobbs decision has shined a bright light on this topic and will be the vehicle ultimately to radically change abortion jurisprudence in Colorado.

But let me tell you what the bill gets right. The bill recognizes the scientific reality that a distinct human being is created at conception. The bill loudly proclaims that that every human being has inherent value and dignity. It highlights the false and unworkable distinction between a human being and a human person. It broadcasts to the world that every human being, no matter their stage in life, their age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identify, race, ethnicity, physical/mental abilities, or financial means have a constitutional right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

The bill denies the pretense that you have to earn human rights by having certain preferred characteristics or by achieving an arbitrary milestone. It draws attention to the primal error that Americans have made throughout our 400-year history -- the dehumanization of a class of human beings to serve some short-term goal or advantage. **We dehumanize, then we exploit, then we often kill.** That was the case for Native Americans. It was the case for Blacks. To a certain extent, it is reflected in how we have treated women, the disabled, the LGBTQ community, and ethnic minorities.

It is true that a human during her first two weeks of existence could accurately be described as a “cluster of cells”. However, by the time a woman knows she is pregnant in the 5<sup>th</sup> week, the embryo has a developing brain and heart. By the seventh week, she is moving. By the 10<sup>th</sup> week the fetus has all her organs in place, and she has typical human features. As early as the 13<sup>th</sup> week she can experience pain. By the 19<sup>th</sup> week she can hear and undergo surgery as an independent patient. As early as the 21<sup>st</sup> week she can survive if born prematurely. Throughout the late second and third trimester she reacts to her mother’s voice, she acquires preferences for specific flavors, she can demonstrate social behavior and retain acoustical memories. The development process is seamless. To define her personhood at any time along that continuum is arbitrary and capricious. It is inhumane.

If we hope for a world where there are no mass shootings, where refugees/immigrants are treated with kindness and compassion, and where differences in ethnicity/race are celebrated, you have to instill an abiding respect for each human life. To promote the killing of our preborn children because of social or economic reasons is the antithesis of this ethic. It is biologically and morally unnatural.

So, this might not be the right language or time, but the bill does challenge every Coloradan to examine their assumptions and look beyond the propaganda to the scientific and ethical reality of abortion.

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