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Senate Judiciary Committee  
Chairman, Senator Lindsey Graham

Dear Senator Graham and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for this hearing, Abortion Until Birth: The Need to Pass the Pain-Capable Child Protection Act.

Experts here today will be providing you with the research regarding unborn children experiencing pain. Today, I will be providing you with insight into my experience of surviving an abortion. And in the words of doctors, being subjected to excruciating pain in the process.

In August of 1977, my biological mother, as a nineteen-year-old college student, had a saline infusion abortion forced upon her by her mother, who was a prominent nurse in their community of Sioux City, Iowa. It was my grandmother's close working relationship with a local abortionist, Dr. Kelberg, that enabled them to force it upon her against her will. It's estimated that she was likely around 31 weeks pregnant at the time of the forced abortion.

As the toxic salt solution of the saline infusion abortion was injected into the amniotic fluid surrounding me in the womb, attempting to scald and poison me to death, I wonder how long it took for the pain to set in. If you read about it online or in medical journals, you will find children like me called the "red skinned," or "candy-apple babies," because that toxic solution would turn the skin bright red, as it peeled it away and moved internally into the organs. I wonder how much I thrashed about as it attacked my body. I've met many women who had saline infusion abortions and who've told me how they actually felt their child thrashing about in their womb after the delivery of the toxic salt solution as it started to poison them.

I can only imagine how much pain I was in over the course of the next five days as I soaked in that toxic salt solution, as they tried time and time again to induce my birthmother's labor with me.

I can only imagine how much pain I was in when I was finally expelled from the womb on that fifth day of the abortion procedure. My arrival into this world was not so much a birth, but an accident, a “live birth” after a saline infusion abortion. My medical records actually state, “a saline infusion for an abortion was done, but was unsuccessful.” I’ve included this record for you to review, along with another that identifies a complication of pregnancy as a saline infusion.

I can only imagine how much pain I was in when I was “laid aside” that day, in the words of a nurse who I’ve now been connected with and who was brave enough to share those details of my life story with me, as arguments about my life and whether I would be provided medical care or simply left to die like my grandmother instructed nurses to do, ensued.

I can only imagine how much pain I was in when a nurse courageously rushed me off to the NICU, shouting out, “she just kept gasping for breath, and so I couldn’t just leave her there to die!” This was also reported to me from the nurse who received me in the NICU that day.

I can only imagine how my pain finally began to subside as medical treatment was provided to me. Sadly, my medical records state that the doctors initially suspected I had a fatal heart defect due to the high level of distress I presented with. I suffered from severe respiratory problems, jaundice, and seizures. I weighed in at 2 pounds, 14 ounces, which is what led a neonatologist to remark in my medical records that I was approximately 31 weeks gestation, as opposed to the 18-20 weeks that the abortionist had indicated.

My health grew steadier by the day, not simply because of the medical care that I received, but because of the love that I was given.

I’ve been blessed to be connected with a number of nurses and even a volunteer who held me, gave me a name when I was left nameless for two months in the hospital, who prayed over me, and even knitted me baby booties, that I still have in my possession today. I was even more blessed to be loved wholeheartedly by my adoptive parents who weren’t deterred by the doctors’ prognoses that I would likely suffer from multiple disabilities as a result of surviving the abortion.

My life has been a set of many miracles, which includes being the mother of two daughters, and now even being united with my biological mother and many members of her family and my biological father’s.

I have lived every day since discovering the truth about my survival at the age of 14 knowing that, sadly, children just like me are being subjected to similarly horrific, painful abortion procedures that lead to their death.

Abortion doesn't spare a child from suffering, it causes suffering.

We live in a day and time where the science of human development, the power of ultrasound, and the sheer number of survivors like me clearly shows the truth about life. I know of 281 others just like me through my work as the founder of The Abortion Survivors Network, although statistics reflect that the actual number is much higher.

There should no longer be a question of when life begins. There should no longer be the question of which lives, if any, should be protected. There should be no question of whether there should be limits to abortion. We are one of the few nations who fail to do so, and the American public continues to report through polling that they support such limits.

There should be no question that every child should be spared from the excruciating pain of an abortion procedure like I was subjected to.

The question that does remain, however, is what you will do in the face of this reality about life and abortion in our nation. I'm here today to ask you, will you commit to preventing what happened to me from happening to other children? Every child deserves better than to suffer the pain of an abortion.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Melissa Ohden

MOTHER'S AGE (AT TIME OF DELIVERY) 19	BLOOD TYPE A pos	RH SENSITIZATION (IF YES, GIVE TYPE) <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		
TOTAL NUMBER OF PREGNANCIES 9	BORN ALIVE —	PREMATURE —	NOW LIVING —	DIED WITHIN 28 DAYS OF BIRTH —
(DO NOT INCLUDE THIS NEWBORN)	FETAL DEATHS AT ANY TIME AFTER CONCEPTION		UNDER 20 WEEKS	20 WEEKS AND OVER
MATERNAL DISEASE(S) None -		COMPLICATIONS OF THIS PREGNANCY Saline Infusion		
E.D.C.	MEMBRANES RUPTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SPONTANEOUSLY	<input type="checkbox"/> ARTIFICIALLY	DATE 8/28 TIME 6:30 P.M.
ANALGESIA (TYPE AND TIME) Percutaneous Numb. 8 AM, 2:20 PM, 11 AM.		ANESTHESIA (TYPE AND DURATION) None -		
COMPLICATIONS OF DELIVERY None -		PRESENTATION V4 ROP		

INFANT RECORD

EYE PROPHYLAXIS CORD CHECKED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	TYPE Ag No 3 170	NURSES SIGNATURE Schindler M -
WEIGHT 2-14 1/2	LENGTH	IDENTIFICATION METHOD USED ID Bands + footprints
IDENTIFICATION AND SEX CHECKED BY	SIGNATURES: DELIVERY ROOM NURSE AND NURSERY NURSE Schindler M - Schindler M	
APGAR SCORE To ICN. fetus active + weak cry -	1 MINUTE 6	5 MINUTES 2

NEW BORN INFANT RECORD

ST. LUKE'S MEDICAL CENTER

SIOUX CITY, IOWA

GIVEN NAME OF BABY \_\_\_\_\_ SEX Female HOEP. NO. 76844  
 DATE OF BIRTH 8/29/77 TIME \_\_\_\_\_ COLOR \_\_\_\_\_ TYPE OF DELIVERY 150  
 DOCTOR Williams PEDIATRICIAN \_\_\_\_\_ FEEDING Bottle  
 IDENTIFICATION NO. 1034 SIGNATURE OF NURSE APPLYING BAND, TAKING FOOT PRINTS \_\_\_\_\_  
 NAME OF MOTHER \_\_\_\_\_ PAPA PA GT  
 NAME OF FATHER \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS La Sabin City, Neb  
 RN D. P. S. RELIGION Luth CIRCUMCISION \_\_\_\_\_ DISMISSAL DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
 ROOM NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

## CONSULTATION

314 East 31st, So. Sioux City, NE.

Baby Girl

Mother;

Admit Intensive Care Nursery on August 29, 1977.

M-OBN

Date of Birth: 8/29/77.

This baby was born prematurely to a 19-year-old unmarried mother. According to the mother's hospital record, her last menstrual period was 5/01/77, however, she reportedly stated she had had no period in March or April. She was estimated to be about 13 weeks pregnant. On August 24th, Saline infusion for an abortion was done but was unsuccessful. On August 27th, Pitocin drip was started. It was also repeated on August 28th. Her bag of water broke about 6:30 PM. Pitocin drip was continued on the 29th. The baby was delivered spontaneously in bed by a nurse. Apgar at one minute was reported to be 6 and at 5 minutes 2. The baby is reported to have had a spontaneous weak cry, it was a vertex BGA presentation. The mother is reported to be a Group A, Rh positive. The baby was brought to the Intensive Care Nursery and was put in about 35 percent O2, was bagged some and respirations were established but the cry remained rather weak. Capillary blood gases were ordered. pH was 7.07, pCO2 62, CO2 20, pO2 was 51. Exam revealed a premature infant. In 35 percent O2. She has some grunting and retracting. Respirations are approximately 42 per minute. The pulse was 140. The color was relatively pink. Birth weight was approximately 1,300 grams. Skull symmetrical. There is some bruising. Fontanelles is soft. Eyes, ears, nose and throat, pupils reactive to light. Ears, nose and throat were negative.  
 LUNGS: Respirations around 60 per minute. There is only fair air entry. There is some grunting and retracting.  
 HEART: Not enlarged. NO murmurs.  
 Rate 140 per minute.  
 ABDOMEN: Soft. No masses.  
 Liver, kidneys and spleen not enlarged. No hernias.  
 GENITALIA: Negative.  
 EXTREMITIES: Negative.

## IMPRESSION:

Prematurity, probably is developing a respiratory distress syndrome.

Recommend: Slightly-Fluorinated, umbilical artery catheterization and so forth.

JH:lla

St. Luke's

INFANT CONSULTATION

8/29/77

Dictated: 8/31/77