

## **“Let’s give women a better option”**

It was August 1960. A baby girl was born to teen parents who married and faced the challenges of parenting so young. That baby girl was me. My parents chose life at a time when the alternative of an abortion was rare. Fast forward to 1977. Again, a young high school girl finds herself pregnant at age 16, facing the prospect of single motherhood. Her support system was willing to consider abortion because it was seen as the only solution for young mothers. That young woman was me, and not knowing where else to turn I had an abortion.

As someone who has had an abortion, let me say this: In our post-*Roe* country, allowing more access to abortion is not a solution.

What I needed in that situation was support and encouragement. That's why I work with women who need that during the most difficult moments of their lives. Women in difficult pregnancies need a support network. They need accompaniment including material and spiritual support.

Yet Proposal 3, which is seen as a response to the fall of *Roe*, would provide absolutely none of that. Instead, Proposal 3 would just double down on what our society has proposed as the only solution for women: More abortion.

Not only would this amendment allow for abortion with no restrictions throughout all of pregnancy, but it would also make this already dangerous procedure more dangerous than ever.

No more informed consent. No more state-implemented health and safety standards. No more ensuring only licensed physicians perform abortions. No more consequences for anyone who injures or kills a woman during an abortion.

Proposal 3 would jeopardize all those protections with the broad granting of a "fundamental right" to reproductive freedom that cannot be infringed upon or burdened. Even though the amendment allows regulation for a "compelling state interest," the bar to meet that compelling interest is so high that all current restrictions would fall short and be wiped away, making it impossible for the Legislature to put any restrictions on abortion going forward.

Supporters of Proposal 3 promise it will provide the right to reproductive freedom. But that right would come at the expense of the health, safety and welfare of women. Abortion would be a much more dangerous choice.

Further, this right to abortion is so broad it would apply to children – the amendment uses the word individual instead of adult. This would render the state's existing parental consent law for teens seeking abortions invalid, because a child of any age would have a "fundamental right" to abortion that could not be infringed upon.

I had my abortion with the support of my mother. I can't imagine taking her out of the equation, regardless of what choice I or another vulnerable teenager might make.

I regret the abortion I had. It took a lot of healing to move past that regret. Why would we want to steer more women down that same path? I experienced great emotional pain and suffered with infertility issues later when trying to conceive with my husband.

Women deserve and need to be informed of the risks of an abortion procedure. There is no healthy or safe abortion. There is absolutely no certainty whatsoever that even the “best” abortionist can guarantee they will keep women healthy and safe. And removing protections will only increase the lives lost without accountability measures in place for those who commit malpractice.

Let's give women a better option. Instead of putting our collective efforts into expanding and de-regulating abortion, let's put that energy toward supporting mothers and meeting them where they are at, physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Michigan voters must reject Proposal 3, and instead work to build a state where moms are accompanied and supported and not just pushed toward an abortion that will hurt them one way or another.

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***Note: This piece was published on Oct. 22, 2022 at the following link:***

***<https://www.hollandsentinel.com/story/opinion/columns/2022/10/22/my-take-lets-give-women-a-better-option/69578478007/>***