



The Justice Foundation

8122 Datapoint Drive, Suite 812 ♦ San Antonio, TX 78229 ♦ Tel. 210-614-7157 ♦ Fax 210-614-6656
www.operationoutcry.org ♦ www.txjf.org

**BEFORE THE LEGISLATURE OF OHIO
HB228
CHAIRMAN WHITE AND MEMBERS OF THE HEALTH COMMITTEE**

**PREPARED TESTIMONY OF LISA DUDLEY, PARALEGAL
Representative of Operation Outcry
June 13, 2006**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My name is Lisa Dudley. I am the Paralegal at The Justice Foundation in San Antonio, Texas, a nonprofit legal foundation that represents clients free of charge in landmark cases and I am here on behalf of the women of Operation Outcry which is a project of The Justice Foundation. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak to this committee regarding this most important issue.

I would like to present to this committee over 2,000 sworn affidavits from the women of Operation Outcry from all across America, including Ohio. These affidavits have been collected over the last 6 years and have been used as evidence in Norma McCorvey and Sandra Cano's efforts to overturn their cases which legalized abortion in 1973. (Norma McCorvey is the "Roe" of *Roe v. Wade* and Sandra Cano is the "Doe" of *Doe v. Bolton*). These affidavits have also been submitted to the South Dakota and Louisiana state legislatures who have recently passed bills banning abortion and were submitted into the congressional record at a US Senate Judiciary Subcommittee hearing last summer. These affidavits are the largest known body of direct sworn testimony about the effects of abortion. Along with the affidavits is a letter brief from our Senior Staff Attorney describing the legal basis for this evidence and the process of collecting these affidavits.

I have worked with hundreds of women hurt by abortion for the past 6 years throughout this nation and internationally. These women have shared their pain, guilt and lifelong consequences that they suffered following their abortions. These women call or write daily wanting someone to listen to their story and tell them how they can make their voice heard concerning the truth about abortion. Recently we have received calls and affidavits from many women in Ohio

as a result of this hearing. We also receive calls from women looking for healing and we refer them to abortion recovery programs in their area. They all talk about how their lives are not the same, and how they have suffered from depression, anxiety, alcohol and/or substance abuse, suicidal thoughts or attempts, and problems in relationships with their husbands and/or living children. Here are direct quotes from some of these women from all over the nation:

Cheryl – “The shame and guilt I experienced after my abortion held me back from leading the life I could have lived. For many years I couldn’t get past the pain of taking my child’s life.”

Mollie - “Deep emotional loss, guilt, inability to bond with subsequent children, loss of maternal identity. It is the worst mistake you could ever make.”

Nicole - “Abortion is so devastating that I would never do it again – even at the cost of my own life.”

Debra – “While I was still under the effects of the sedation, but after the procedure was completed, I began loud, uncontrollable sobbing . . . I can honestly say this was and is the lowest day of my life.”

Brandy - “No one told me that I would hear cries in the middle of the night.”

Amy Marie - “It devastated me. I had nightmares, flashbacks, fits of rage, uncontrollable crying, trouble sleeping, and could not look at pregnant women or children without feeling hurt, anger, and guilt.”

Beth - “I was suicidal; full of guilt and shame. Suffered from fear and depression. Caused marital and relational problems, crying spells, anxiety, panic attacks, sleep disturbances.”

Linda – “This is the horror of our generation – I believe that this abuse to women needs to be outlawed.”

Karen – “I had a fear I wouldn’t be able to have my own children.”

Mayela – “When I heard the suction machine and felt the pain, I knew they were tearing my

baby apart.”

Ava – “It brings heartache, it brings hurts.”

Tina – “The main thing I remember is that woman holding my hand and telling me it would be over soon. If I could see her today, I would tell her that she lied. My abortion is never over.”

In addition to psychological effects of abortion, we have sworn testimony from women who experienced physical consequences as a result of their abortion including infertility. For example, Luana says:

Luana – “When my husband and I were unable to conceive a child, my doctor informed me that my abortions destroyed my tubes and ovaries and caused me to be infertile. A few years ago, I had a hysterectomy because of the severe damage caused from the suction procedure.”

I am here to share the testimonies of women speaking from their hearts about how abortion devastated their lives and impacted their families. Many of these women have committed their lives to speaking out publicly as I am about this secret shame. We are hopeful that by doing so we can educate those on both sides of this issue regarding the consequences of abortion. Some of these women from Ohio are here with me today.

We believe that women are most vulnerable when pregnant particularly in an unplanned pregnancy and need maximum protection from making an uninformed or coerced decision that would terminate her relationship with her child and affect her own emotional, psychological and physical health.

Most of these affidavits submitted today indicate that women were not given counseling nor were other options discussed with them at the abortion facility. In all other surgical procedures, the doctor meets with the patient at least once and gives detailed information about the procedure along with options and risks. A woman having an abortion seldom, if ever meets the abortionist until the procedure begins.

I, like the many women of Operation Outcry, have experienced the pain and aftermath of abortion.

At 24-years-old, I learned I was pregnant. My boyfriend immediately asked me not to have “it.” He said that he would pay his half for an abortion. All of my friends said I shouldn’t have “it.” I was afraid to tell my family because I knew they would be disappointed that I had

gotten pregnant under these circumstances. Because I was already a single parent of a son with no support from his father, I truly believed I had no options. I felt pressured and trapped and that I had no way out. I had taken others to have abortions in the past, so it really didn't seem that big of a deal. So at eight weeks pregnant, my friend, who I had taken for her abortion years before, was now taking me.

When we arrived at the facility I signed in, gave a urine sample, and waited. Along with five other women, a lady talked about how we should learn to use birth control and asked why we were there. While we were all together, the lady asked each of us briefly if this is what we wanted to do. Then we were shuffled into another waiting area. A Hispanic woman was there for her sixth abortion. I remember thinking, "How could she keep doing this?"

I was then taken into the procedure room. The abortionist came into the room. I looked up and realized that the abortionist was one of the clients of the law office where I worked. I wanted to die right there. The shame that came over me was just unbearable; however, he never looked at me. He never examined me, he never looked at my medical chart, he never asked me any questions. The assistant gave me a mask with medication to relax me. She whispered to me that I needed to stay completely still. The abortionist said I was going to feel a little discomfort as he administered the local anesthetic. There was much more pain than a little discomfort.

The abortionist used the vacuum machine. This seemed to last an eternity. I felt like I was being violently shaken off of the table. The nurse yelled at me to be still. I had no control over what was happening to my body. Then came the tears. I knew right then I was making the biggest mistake of my life. But it was too late. The only compassion I received was from the assistant who patted my head and said for me to go ahead and cry, that it was good to cry.

When they finally shut down the machine, I heard the snap of the metal instruments and the abortionist's gloves as he removed them. He slapped me on the thigh and said, "Good luck to you," leaving the room without ever looking at me. At the time I was relieved because I was ashamed I was there, but now I realize how cold and disrespectful he was and how I wish he had had the guts to look me in the eye.

The assistant helped me up, and the nurse told me to be careful not to get blood on the floor. I was weak and shaking uncontrollably. As I stood, blood poured out all over the floor. The nurse yelled at me that I was making a mess.

I then was taken to another room where I was told to wait. There were recliners lined up with small tables next to them with juice and cookies. Girls were curled up in fetal positions crying and in pain. I was desperate to get out. When I was released, I was given a prescription for antibiotics and told I had to return for a follow-up. I remember thinking right then, "I will never

come here again.”

I didn't tell any of my family what had happened that day and I began wearing the mask to hide my shame that lasted years. The shame was so bad I wouldn't even fill the prescription for antibiotics following the abortion because I didn't want anyone to know where I had been. The pain I suffered was the worst physical and psychological pain I have ever experienced. I felt deceived and violated. I had no idea what abortion would do to me. If someone had only told me the truth, I would have never gone through with it.

Unfortunately, my abortion began a long walk into a dark destructive lifestyle. I began drinking heavily, experimented with drugs and spent most of my spare time in night clubs to numb the pain. I had become a “pro” at hiding things. I was a good mother when I had to be, and then I had “me” time where I could be as bad as I thought I was. I had no self-worth. No one in my family was aware there was ever a problem. After the abortion, I had bouts of uncontrollable crying, sleeping too much, pain in my chest and trouble breathing. My doctor diagnosed me with depression and panic attacks for which I was prescribed medication. I never realized that this was because of my abortion.

If abortion had not been legal, I would have never been in that abortion facility that day. My child would be alive and in high school. I would not have had the years of pain and anguish over taking the life of my own child. I would not have had the years of substance abuse and depression.

There is nothing that brings more shame and pain to women than abortion. The government regulates and disallows procedures, medications and treatments that are not safe and bring harm to its citizens. Abortion should be at the top of the list of procedures not allowed. Because of the scientific evidence we now have, because of testimony upon testimony of women about how abortion hurt them, because we now know it is not good for women and it really isn't a choice, abortion should no longer be legal and I urge the legislature of Ohio to pass a ban on abortion.