

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

**PREPARED TESTIMONY OF LINDA HOLLOPETER**

**JUNE 13, 2006**

My name is Linda Hollopeter and I am from Columbus, Ohio. I had an abortion 16 years ago. I was 19 and attending the University of Kentucky. I was married and experiencing severe mental and physical abuse by the father of the baby. When I found out that, I was almost 16 weeks pregnant the father of the baby informed me that abortion was my only option. My friends all encouraged me to have an abortion as well. I felt helpless and all alone. I wanted to keep my baby or at least place him or her up for adoption.

While at the Abortionists office I remember feeling pressured to hurry and make a decision because I was so far along. This frightened me as well. I was not given any information about the physical, emotional or psychological risks that were involved with this procedure. I just remember showing up with my \$350 cash (they only accepted cash) and told to wait in the waiting room. There were those of us who were crying as we waited our turn. Once in the procedure room, I was not given anesthesia. I was just given a valium. This procedure took all of about 10-12 minutes. I remember feeling I was going to die from the excruciating pain. The swirling suction sound to this day is triggered by my own vacuum cleaner. After my baby had been suctioned from my body I then had to drape the sheet filled with blood around my legs and make my way to the bathroom. At that moment, I felt as if part of me had died along with my child and life, as I knew it, was altered forever. My spirit had died.

My life took an ever increasing spiral downward. Within a year, my abusive marriage was annulled. I then developed a severe eating disorder, debilitating depression, engaged in drug and alcohol abuse, constant suicidal thoughts permeated my mind, became a workaholic and for the next 14 years did all that I could to drown out the cries of my baby and the intense pain and suffering in my heart and soul.

By 1995, I was remarried and I experienced marital problems. The first pregnancy after marriage was filled with horrible nightmares that my baby would be born deformed or stillborn to punish me for what I had done. I felt unworthy to be carrying life once again. I suffered sever depression throughout the pregnancy and continued my eating disorder. After the birth of my daughter, my maternal instincts were so damaged that when she would cry I would have horrific thoughts of harming her instead of the nurturing response to cradle her in my arms. As she grew older, this neglect continued. I was still suffering from depression as well. The same continued throughout my second and third pregnancies. The dreams of death and dying became more intense. After the birth of my first son, I was placed in what would be the first of two psychiatric hospitals. I was given medication for my condition but after a dozen psychiatrists, no one ever addressed the issue of abortion.

Since moving to Ohio I have found a wonderful psychiatrist who has helped me tremendously. I finally have peace, and my children are no longer neglected but are embraced. I know I will never forget what has happened but I now have the tools to deal with my Post Traumatic Abortion Stress. My local pregnancy center has helped tremendously as well.

I was in an emotional prison serving a life sentence and then I realized I held the key to my freedom. It was acknowledging and dealing with the pain of my abortion. I believe that society needs to become aware that while abortion takes the life of an innocent baby the mother suffers a death as well and is left behind to deal with abortion's aftermath.