

To Committee Chair Wiklund and Committee Members,

**I'm writing to you today in strong support of SF70.**

I spent my childhood on the Iron Range, where not only is abortion inaccessible but it's stigmatized and shamed. For years, I spent my life terrified that I would become pregnant in high school, inevitably have a baby, and I'd never be able to live my dream of going to college and becoming a doctor.

When I was 15, my friend had a pregnancy scare and told me she would get an abortion if she were pregnant. I told her I would do the same thing. Through this, I suddenly realized that I did have control over my future. If I became pregnant, if my birth control failed, I could get an abortion. I could choose my future and continue to live out my dreams, choosing if I wanted a child on that journey with me.

Now, I spend my time advocating for and protecting abortion care in Minnesota. Many of the patients I help access their abortions are from the community I grew up in, the Iron Range. Whether we like it or not, the reality is that 1 in 4 people who can become pregnant in their lifetime will get an abortion. Yes, this includes our conservative, anti-abortion communities. I see the proof firsthand.

Every single patient I talk to before their abortion has a unique situation, specific only to them, that resulted in them choosing to access an abortion. Only people who can become pregnant feel the harsh impacts of abortion restrictions and are treated as lesser members of society - not the politicians creating the restrictions. If someone decides they need more time to think about their pregnancy, they'll take more time. If they want to tell their parents, they will. Mandatory waiting periods, parental notification laws, and scripts written by anti-abortion legislators paint a condescending picture of a damsel in distress who can't make decisions about their own healthcare. It's time for politicians to start trusting patients and understanding that people can, in fact, determine their reproductive futures.

Reproductive decisions are deeply personal. Being forced to carry a pregnancy to term and give birth, inevitably parenting, is torture I can't even begin to imagine - and this is the reality for many Americans right now.

I've talked to a handful of patients on the phone who sob to me and ask me how they're supposed to get an abortion if they live 300 miles away from the nearest abortion clinic. They tell me they have to get an abortion, they have to take care of their kids, they don't have money, and they don't have healthcare. The answer is, they won't get an abortion. They know that, too. They're calling a clinic in Minnesota and begging for help as a last-ditch effort.

Please, let us stop living this nightmare.

Cassidy Thompson  
Duluth, Minnesota