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On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2002

I have a had an abortion...this is my story:

before you get an IUD you are required to take a pregnancy test - i was 23, had already dropped out of college twice and at the time i felt as tho i couldn't make any more mistakes (for the rest of my life...slightly naïve). i was trying to be responsible but i was in love, in a new & chaotic relationship...i hadn't admitted it to myself and i had really irregular periods so it wasn't at all obvious, but i already knew i was pregnant. the dr. came in (for what should have been my IUD consult) & informed me i was 7 weeks pregnant. they told me i had many options, but before they could list them i blurted that i wanted an abortion.

i worked at doggy daycare at the time. the thing about doggy daycare is you're stuck in a room often with just one other person & 40+ dogs for 6 hours, with nothing to do but talk and pick up poop. we normally passed the time by making increasingly specific and insane dog jokes. when i came back to work after a few days off for the abortion, i was placed with one of my favorite co workers. she could tell something was wrong, and i opened up pretty quickly. after patiently listening to my story, she told me her own: a new love, attempts to be careful, a mistake. a play by play of my own experience. i found out that both her and another co worker had also had abortions.

up to that point i had felt cocooned in my shame, unable to forgive myself. i hadn't told anyone but my roommate. i was utterly absorbed in my self-hatred. suddenly i realized that i was not alone. to judge myself was to judge these women who i already deeply admired and respected. the hypocrisy in holding myself to a different standard than the people around me.

to cheer me up that co-worker took me and our other coworker out for drinks. we chanted "abortion club" the entire night, drunk and defiant. our chant may seem crass, minimizing what some view as a weighty decision, but it saved my life. abortion isn't a bad word. people who have abortions are normal people. they should be trusted as experts on their own lives and their own bodies. while simultaneously crying, laughing, and chanting i realized that i wasn't special, or alone. that amazing people make this choice everyday.

my story of my abortion is regular, run of the mill, lucky, even. planned parenthood, and the community support i received afterwards, was life-saving. i have never regretted my choice. all i wish is for others to have access to make the same choice

without feeling shame, stigma, or loneliness. if you have had an abortion - you are amazing for possessing the wisdom, knowledge and courage to self-determine your own life. i hope you always remember that.

Planned Parenthood figured out the paperwork for insurance so luckily my abortion was accessible, covered by insurance, and relatively straight forward. It likely saved my life - I cannot imagine where I would be right now if I had not had access to an easy abortion, but I definitely would not be in law school or pursuing my goals and dreams in the way that I am right now. Unfortunately, abortion rights do not translate to abortion access - abortion remains inaccessible for many people, especially those marginalized due to race, sexuality, gender, or economic status. HB 2002 is critical to ensure expanded access to abortion, and I urge you to vote YES ON HB 2002!  
Thank you for your time.