

**Testimony of Marcia Carroll, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in support of HR 748, The Child Interstate Abortion Notification Act, before the Subcommittee on the Constitution, U.S. House of Representatives March 3, 2005**

Good afternoon, my name is Marcia Carroll. I am from Lancaster, Pennsylvania. I would like to begin by thanking you for inviting me here to speak and share my family's story. The following is a horrifying series of events centered around my fourteen year old daughter.

On Christmas Eve 2004, my daughter informed me she was pregnant. I assured her I would seek out all resources and help that was available. As her parents, her father and I would stand beside her and support any decision she made.

We scheduled appointments with her pediatrician, her private counselor, and her school nurse. I followed all of their advice and recommendations. They referred us to Healthy Beginnings Plus, Lancaster Family Services, and the WIC program. They discussed all her options with her. I purposefully allowed my daughter to speak alone with professionals so that she would speak her mind and not just say what she thought I wanted to hear.

My daughter **chose** to have the baby and raise it. My family fully supported my daughter's decision to keep her baby and offered her our love and support.

Subsequently, her boyfriend's family began to harass my daughter and my family. They started showing up at our house to express their desire for my daughter to have an abortion. When that did not work, his grandmother started calling my daughter without my knowledge. They would tell her that if she kept the baby, she couldn't see her boyfriend again. They threatened to move out of state.

I told his family that my daughter had our full support in her decision to keep the baby. She also had the best doctors, counselors, and professionals to help her through the pregnancy. We all had her best interests in mind.

The behavior of the boy's family began to concern me to the point where I called my local police department for advice. Additionally, I called the number for an abortion center to see how old you have to be to have an abortion in our state.

I felt safe when they told me my minor daughter had to be 16 years of age in the state of Pennsylvania to have an abortion without parental consent. I found out later that the Pennsylvania Abortion Control Act actually says that parental consent is needed for a minor under 18 years of age. It never occurred to me that I would need to check the laws of other states around me. I thought as a resident of the state of Pennsylvania that she was protected by Pennsylvania state laws. Boy, was I ever wrong.

On Feb. 16th, I sent my daughter to her bus stop with \$2.00 of lunch money. I thought she was safe at school. She and her boyfriend even had a prenatal class scheduled after school.

However, what really happened was that her boyfriend and his family met with her down the road from her bus stop and called a taxi. The adults put the children in the taxi to take them to the train station. His stepfather met the children at the train station, where he had to purchase my daughter's

ticket since she was only fourteen. They put the children on the train from Lancaster to Philadelphia. From there, they took two subways to New Jersey. That is where his family met the children and took them to the abortion clinic, where one of the adults had made the appointment.

When my daughter started to cry and have second thoughts, they told her they would leave her in New Jersey. They planned, paid for, coerced, harassed, and threatened her into having the abortion. They left her alone during the abortion and went to eat lunch.

After the abortion, his stepfather and grandmother drove my daughter home from New Jersey and dropped her off down the road from our house.

My daughter told me that on the way home she started to cry, they got angry at her and told her there was nothing to cry about.

Anything could have happened to my daughter at the abortion facility or on the ride back home. These people did not know my daughter's medical history, yet they took her across state lines to have a medical procedure without my knowledge or consent. Our family will be responsible for the medical and psychological consequences for my daughter as a result of this procedure that was completed unbeknownst to me.

I was so devastated that this could have been done that I called the local police department to see what could be done. They were just as shocked and surprised as I was that there was nothing that could be done in this horrible situation.

The state of Pennsylvania does have a parental consent law. Something has to be done to prevent this from happening to other families. This is just not acceptable to me and should not happen to families in this country. If your child goes to her school clinic for a headache, a registered nurse can't give her a Tylenol or aspirin without a parent's written permission.

As a consequence of my daughter being taken out of our state for an abortion without parental knowledge, she is suffering intense grief. My daughter cries herself to sleep at night and lives with this everyday.

I think about what I could or should have done to keep her safe. Everybody tells me I did everything I could have and should have done. It doesn't make me feel any better, knowing everything I did was not enough to protect my daughter.

It does ease my mind to know with your help that we can make a difference and change the law to protect other girls and their families. I urge your support for *The Child Interstate Abortion Notification Act*. It is critical that this law passes in Congress. The right of parents to protect the health and welfare of their minor daughters needs to be protected. No one should be able to circumvent state laws by performing an abortion in another state on a minor daughter without parental consent.

Thank you for your time.