



# The Justice Foundation

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

**PREPARED TESTIMONY OF TRACY REYNOLDS**

**June 13, 2006**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My name is Tracy Reynolds. I am the Director of Outreach for Operation Outcry and answer the helpline for Rachel's Vineyard, a national organization working with women and men who have experienced post-abortion trauma and seek healing after abortion. Thank you for taking time to study this significant issue and learning the truth about the devastating affects of abortion on women and their families.

Through my work with Operation Outcry and Rachel's Vineyard, I have listened to and counseled hundreds of women and men across the country including Ohio which has three active Rachel's Vineyard retreat centers. These calls often come in the middle of the night where women are literally crying out in grief and pain over their decisions to kill their unborn child. According to the calls we receive and the women who come to Rachel's Vineyard retreats, the abortion decision was usually made in haste often with coercion from parents, boyfriends or significant others. These women initially made their decision based on fear often feeling trapped either emotionally or financially compounded with the guilt and shame of being in an unplanned pregnancy. Some women immediately experience regret and guilt following their abortion and call looking for help. A 22 year old girl from Ohio whose parents were pastors became pregnant outside of marriage. She was always pro-life, however, her boyfriend said that they were too young to have a child and so not wanting to lose him she caved in to the pressure. This was three months ago and she is still suffering from guilt and depression. Her boyfriend also suffering recently attempted suicide. Other women do not experience the effects of their abortions until much later believing that they just "got rid of a blob of tissue" and that it wasn't really a baby. Tracy, who recently attended a Rachel's Vineyard said, "When I heard my second baby's heart-

beat at 8 weeks pregnant, my world came crashing down because I realized that all four of my aborted babies were approximately the same age and that they too had heartbeats and were actually alive before I killed them.”

Some of the after effects these women experience include depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts or attempts, difficulty in relationships with husbands and/or children, over-protectiveness with living children, substance abuse, nightmares and flashbacks to name a few.

We also receive calls and testimonies from women who have experienced rape and/or incest and were given no options other than abortion. Many of these women feel guilt and remorse and feel that they have compounded their tragedy of rape and/or incest by taking the life of their innocent unborn child. Kathy from Ohio was raped by her abusive husband who she was in the process of divorcing. She was strongly encouraged to abort that child and has regretted it ever since suffering from unbearable guilt as the innocent child paid the price for the crime of the father.

There are thousands of women who have gone through a Rachel’s Vineyard or other abortion recovery programs throughout the country and the rate is increasing annually. Nearly all of these women who have attended Rachel’s Vineyard say that if they had it to do over again, they would have chosen life. These same women did not fully understand nor were they fully informed of the devastating consequences they would experience as a result of ending their child’s life. The callers also talk about the supposed counseling given at the abortion facility which is usually “Are you sure this is what you want to do?” a discussion about birth control with no other options presented or consequences fully discussed with them.

I recently received a call from a woman who had been exposed to the German measles and whose physician recommended abortion due to the possibility of serious birth defects. She now regrets her abortion decision and is suffering from depression, suicidal thoughts and severe marital problems. I identified with this as I was a child born totally blind after my mother was exposed to the German measles. My mother told me years later that if abortion had been legal when she was pregnant with me that she would have chosen abortion.

I spent my life believing that I was just like everybody else and grew up doing everything that everyone else did.

My mother and I had a stormy relationship; and at 16, I moved out to live with a friend. One night my mother called me after she had been drinking. She said that she was very sad for me because she didn’t think that I would ever find love or get married, and that no one would want me. I was very angry with her words, and I became deeply affected and spent a lot of

my early years trying to prove her wrong. This led me into self-destructive, impossible relationships.

In 1981, two significant events occurred that changed my life: I became pregnant, and I had an abortion. When I learned that I was pregnant, I had two distinctly different reactions. Initially, I was overjoyed and filled with wonder because I was actually carrying my own child. Then, I felt guilty and ashamed because the child was the result of a brief affair with a married man.

When I told a few people about my pregnancy, I was advised to get an abortion. I felt an obligation to tell the father of the baby – not because I wanted or expected anything from him but because I believed he had the right to know. He was very upset and begged me to terminate the pregnancy. He said that knowing he had a child out there would ruin his life.

In my heart, I deeply wanted to have the child, but I didn't want to be responsible for someone else's unhappiness. I decided to go through with the abortion but changed my mind at the abortion facility and walked out. I felt a tremendous sense of relief, but then I had to face the people who encouraged me to have the abortion, including the father of the baby.

Torn by the decision I faced, I saw a psychiatrist who was also an abortionist who also told me that abortion would be the best solution under the circumstances. I finally succumbed to the pressure.

I vividly remember the sounds, the pain, the feeling of having my child ripped from my body, and the immediate emptiness. The biggest regret of my life is that I didn't follow my heart and have the courage to follow through with my convictions to give birth to my baby. Instead I caved into pressure and advice from others and the then belief that it wasn't really a baby which now I know is wrong.

Immediately after my abortion, I experienced fits of crying and rage. For years, I tried to repress the memory my abortion. I never talked about that "secret" in my past. I had dreams, sometimes nightmares, and sometimes of my baby girl being alive, talking, and quite advanced for her age.

After a period of self-destructive relationships and behavior, I withdrew from both and through myself into my work. I became a human resources manager and also provided crisis counseling. I chose to counsel others through their pain rather than dealing with my own.

I began my healing journey when I heard a friend tell her story of her abortion on an internet radio broadcast. This had a profound effect on me and I subsequently went through an abortion recovery program through Rachel's Vineyard.

After being in corporate America for many years, I have decided to devote my life to

speaking the truth and educating the public that abortion hurts women, men and families. I also continue to counsel women through Rachel's Vineyard and speak in public forums to educate and provide resources across the country regarding the truth about abortion.

Over the last 33 years, abortion has made a serious impact upon the lives of women, men and children. When abortion was legalized, it was believed that "it is not a baby" and "abortion is a safe procedure that helps women". Now we know the truth through 3D and 4D ultrasound that it is a baby and through the testimonies of the women we know conclusively that abortion hurts women and their families. We have given a conflicting message because it is legal and yet it is also killing an unborn child depriving a mother of her instinctual relationship with that child. We need to protect our women and families and send a consistent message.