

**Opening Statement of Republican Leader Greg Walden  
Subcommittee on Health  
“Protecting Women’s Access to Reproductive Health Care”  
February 12, 2020**

*As Prepared for Delivery*

Thank you, Madame Chair. During the State of the Union address, President Trump welcomed and spoke about Ellie Schneider, a little girl who was delivered at just 21 weeks’ gestation. The President called for policies to protect the unborn after fetal viability. Following the State of the Union, the Senate Judiciary held a hearing on Medical Care for Children Born Alive. Instead of considering these policies, we are regrettably convened here today to discuss yet another, deceptively titled, partisan bill that has no chance of being considered by the Senate nor signed into law.

The issue of abortion is a very sensitive one. It is a painful topic for the women and men who for whatever reason find themselves facing the dilemma of whether or not to terminate a pregnancy, and in turn, a human life. Abortion is one of the most polarizing subjects in American political discourse, but even many people that consider themselves pro-choice believe some restrictions are appropriate. Seven in 10 Americans support substantial restrictions on abortion after three months of pregnancy.<sup>1</sup> Even nearly half of those who identify as pro-choice

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.wsj.com/articles/waiting-for-a-moderate-democrat-on-abortion-11579651418>

support restrictions on late-term abortions. Indeed, fewer than four in 10 Democrats support abortion at any time and for any reason.<sup>2,3</sup>

Which is why I am so concerned that we are considering a bill so sweeping and out of sync with the views of a majority of Americans. A bill that seeks to strip away even the most minimal protections for women and their unborn children, at any stage of prenatal development. Even the original *Roe v. Wade* ruling never envisioned the extreme positions reflected in this bill. By overturning nearly ALL federal and state limitations on abortion, the deceptively named Women's Health Protection Act would require the provision of abortions on demand, at any stage of pregnancy, regardless of any compelling interest in the welfare of the patient, the protection of human life, or the conscience of the health practitioner.

I oppose this bill for Oregonians like Elizabeth Gillette, who told me about her heartbreaking experience of getting an abortion in 2011. In her letter, which I would like to submit for the record, Elizabeth states that “on demand abortions are not putting the safety of the woman as the highest priority. Because chemical abortion is a procedure that encompasses risks, both physical and emotional, it should not be thought

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.wsj.com/articles/waiting-for-a-moderate-democrat-on-abortion-11579651418>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.kofc.org/un/en/resources/communications/american-attitudes-abortion-knights-of-columbus-marist-poll-slides.pdf>

of as a routine procedure. We need to protect the health of women. It is my deepest hope that no woman would have to suffer as I did.” And with that I would like to yield my remaining time to the gentlelady from Washington.