

Chairman Cohen, Ranking Member Johnson, members of the subcommittee, thank you for having this important conversation, and for inviting me to be part of it.

My name is Busy Philipps.

I am many things. I am a mother to two wonderful girls, 10 and 5, I am a professional actor for over twenty years and a *New York Times* best selling author. I am a wife and a daughter and a talk show host and a volunteer for various children's charities and my kid's schools. I am a sister and I am a best friend.

I am also the one in four women in this country who have had an abortion. After the Governor of Georgia signed bill HB 481, which would ban abortion at six weeks, before most women know they're pregnant, I felt compelled to share my own story on my late night tv show and online.

I had my abortion when I was 15 years old, in my home state of Arizona in 1994. It was not a decision I made lightly. But I have never for a moment doubted that it was the right decision for me.

But so much has changed — in Arizona and other states — since then.

If I were that 15 year old girl in Arizona today, legally I would have to get parental consent. I would be forced to undergo a medically unnecessary ultrasound, to go to a state-mandated in-person counseling, designed solely to shame me into changing my mind, then take a state-mandated 24-hour time out to make sure I really knew what I wanted. And finally, I would be forced to give the state a reason WHY.

Well, here is mine: my body belongs to me, not the state. Women and their doctors are in the best position to make informed decisions about what is best for them. No one else.

Since I shared my story and called on others to do the same using the hashtag #YouKnowMe on social media, the response has been overwhelming.

I have heard from hundreds of thousands with their own stories: women who were raped, women whose very wanted children had severe fetal anomalies, women who were in abusive relationships, women whose birth control failed or who simply weren't ready. I also heard from women who had abortions before abortion was legal in 1973, putting themselves in dangerous circumstances.

No bill that criminalizes abortion will stop anyone from making this incredibly personal decision. These bans will not stop abortion from happening. But they will drive women and girls into the shadows. Which is what this has always been about. Shaming and controlling women's bodies.

In the week after I shared my story on my show, women were coming up to me on the street, in the supermarket and at the gym with tears in their eyes, thanking me for my bravery. But the word bravery didn't sit right with me. Why is it brave to speak to an experience millions of people in the world throughout history have gone through? And then I realized. It is considered brave because as women we have been taught to feel shame about our bodies from birth.

In my life I have had many medical procedures. But no one has ever called me "brave" for talking about them. Abortion is health care, and should not be treated as different from any other health care.

I am sad that we have to come before a row of politicians and give these deeply personal statements. Because the WHY doesn't matter, it should not matter. I am a human being that deserves autonomy in this country that calls itself free. And choices that a human being makes about their own bodies should not be legislated by strangers who can't possibly know or understand each individual's circumstances or beliefs.

I am here today because I stand by the decision I made when I was 15. I am here today because my platform has allowed me to connect with thousands and thousands of people around the country who have made the same choice I made, but who will not all get the chance to come speak to you directly. I am here today to help destigmatize a legitimate medical procedure and continue to encourage women to not allow themselves to be shamed for their choices.

And finally, I am here today for my two little girls, Birdie and Cricket . My dream for them is that they will live in a world in which women are truly equal, with complete control over their own reproductive health. That is the dream I have for all women, regardless of their privilege or parents or what state they live in.

That dream is slipping further and further from reality, with every ban passed.

I hope that you, our elected leaders, can help us reverse the tide.

Thank you, and I look forward to today's discussion.