

Christina Bennett
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Threats to Reproductive Rights in America

Dear Chairman Nadler, Chairman Cohen, Ranking Member Johnson and members of the committee:

My name is Christina Bennett and I'm submitting this testimony in hopes that my personal story will shed light on the issue of abortion in America. In 1981 my mother scheduled to abort me at Mount Sinai Hospital in Hartford, CT. She was pressured by my father to abort and rejected by a mentor in her church who told her she wasn't welcome anymore because she was pregnant out of wedlock. She met with a counselor at the hospital who only assured her she was making the right decision and did not offer counsel on available alternatives.

A black elderly janitor approached my mother after seeing her crying in the hospital hallway. She asked her if she wanted to have her baby and when she said yes, she told her God would give her the strength to have me. When she went to leave my mother was called into the doctor's office where she could see he hadn't cleaned up the blood from the last abortion which disgusted her. He insisted she stay and when she said she wanted to keep me he said, "You've already paid for this. You're just nervous." She repeated her desire to keep me and he yelled at her screaming "Don't leave this room", but she walked out. My mother's experience in that hospital is being repeated every day that abortion is performed in this nation. Women are facing the same coercion, the same shunning, the same lack of counseling and disgusting facility conditions. Unfortunately, many women lack a compassionate advocate to offer them the support and resources they need. This is why I spent four years working at a non-profit pregnancy resource center, practically serving hundreds of women and their children.

Two years ago, I had a profound experience while visiting the National Museum of African-American History. I was reminded of the ways Black Americans were denied the right to equal

protection and due process, treated as property and dehumanized because of the color of our skin. The museum memorialized the many ways Black Americans have been unjustly targeted and killed for centuries. While they showcased examples of the progress Black Americans have made, an ache remains in my heart because of the denial of equal protection and due process to another class of people – the baby in the womb. The sacrifices my ancestors suffered to achieve the freedom and civil rights I enjoy today are not able to protect future generations from a decision made just 8 years before my birth. The Roe v Wade decision rendered 60,000,000 lives unworthy of legal protection and has led to the deaths of over 20 million Black babies since 1973.¹

Babies conceived just a decade prior did not experience the threat of death through legalized abortion. Their lives were not weighed in the balance of whether or not they were wanted. The value of their lives was not measured in terms of their parents' challenging circumstances or convenience.

The dark history of Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger's philosophy on Eugenics and population control was documented by Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas' concurring opinion in *Box v. Planned Parenthood in Indiana and Kentucky*. Today, an increasing number of Black Americans recognize this eugenic and population control philosophy that is having a genocidal impact.

Recently close to a hundred black women of influence - gathered in Charlotte, NC to protest the stealth opening of a Planned Parenthood in the city's oldest Black neighborhood. Along with my testimony I've attached a statement from Lesley Monet, International Director of The Church of God in Christ's Family Life Campaign. Lesley explains the largest Black denomination with

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Abortion Surveillance- United States, 2011, available at: http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss6311a1.htm?s_cid=ss6311a1_w

over 6 million members' opposition to the abortion industry's targeting of Black babies and the Church's program to protest abortion and encourage adoption.

Many of us are tired of the targeting. 78% of Planned Parenthood's surgical facilities are located in Black and Latino neighborhoods.² Black women such as Cree Erwin, Lakisha Wilson, and Tonya Reaves have lost their lives at the hands of an abortion industry that offers substandard medical care as increasingly women are leaving abortion centers by ambulance.³

Taking the lives of our children through abortion doesn't empower or strengthen our communities. Abortion has left behind countless wounded women and men as it silenced millions of children who otherwise would have had a voice and lived out the purpose for their life.

² https://www.protectingblacklife.org/pp_targets/index.html

³ <https://www.sba-list.org/negligence>