

Testimony of Melissa Ohden  
Abortion Survivor and Founder of The Abortion Survivors Network  
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Thank you so much for your time today, Chairman Grassley and Senators.

I am, here today to put a face to what late term abortion looks like and to the importance of infants born alive after abortion being provided timely and appropriate medical care.

In August of 1977, my birthmother, a 19-year-old college student, underwent a saline infusion abortion (the exact words here read, "saline infusion for an abortion was done but was unsuccessful). My medical records indicate that she was believed to be approximately 20 weeks pregnant with me at that time.

A saline infusion abortion involves injecting a toxic salt solution into the amniotic fluid surrounding the preborn child in the womb. The intent of that toxic salt solution is to scald the child to death, from the outside in.

This abortion procedure typically lasted about three days. The child soaked in that toxic salt solution as they were slowly burned to death and then premature labor was induced, with the intent of that deceased child being delivered.

I actually didn't soak in that toxic salt solution for just three days. My medical records indicate that I soaked in it for five, while multiple attempts were made to induce my birthmother's labor with me and expel my dead body. Finally, on the fifth day of the abortion procedure, her labor was successfully induced. I should have been delivered dead that day as a "successful" abortion, a deceased child. But by the grace of God, I was born alive.

I can't even begin to imagine the horrible pain and suffering that I experienced during those five days of the abortion procedure and in the days and weeks that followed. **Abortion doesn't spare a child from suffering, it causes suffering.**

I weighed a little less than 3 pounds when I was delivered at St. Luke's Hospital in Sioux City, Iowa, in that final step of the abortion, which indicated to the medical professionals that my birthmother was much further along in her pregnancy than she had realized and the abortionist failed to recognize or admit to. In fact, one of the first notations in my medical records states that I looked like I was about 31 weeks gestational age when I survived. **Sadly, whether I was 31 weeks or 20, what happened to me was permitted by the law.** (SHOW PICTURE--here I am at 25 days old, after being transferred to the University of Iowa Hospitals. I had climbed my way up to 2 lbs 10 oz at this point).

The fight for my life was far from over after I was delivered in this failed abortion.

In 2013, I learned through contact with my birthmother's family that not only was this abortion forced upon her against her will, but also that it was my maternal grandmother, a nurse, who delivered me in this final step of the abortion.

Unfortunately, I also learned that when my grandmother realized that the abortion had failed to end my life, she demanded that I be left to die.

I may never know how, exactly, two nurses who were on staff that day found out about me or where they found me, but what I do know is that their willingness to fight for medical care to be provided to me saved my life.

I know where children like me were left to die at St. Luke's Hospital—a utility closet. In 2014, I met a nurse who assisted in a saline infusion abortion there in 1976, and delivered a living baby boy. After he was delivered alive, she followed her superior's orders and placed him in the utility closet in a bucket of formaldehyde to be picked up later as medical waste after he died there, alone.

**A bucket of formaldehyde in a utility closet was meant to be my fate after I wasn't first scalded to death through the abortion.**

Yet here I am today because I was **ultimately given the medical care that I so desperately needed and deserved.**

I am actually thankful that the abortion meant to end my life occurred at a hospital, as the medical treatment that I needed for my severe respiratory and liver problems and seizures--the oxygen, blood transfusions and everything thereafter was located right there.

If my birthmother's abortion would have occurred at an abortion clinic, I doubt that I would be alive today. The emergency medical care I needed would have taken much longer to access, if it would have been accessed at all. Time is of the essence for children like me.

**As a fellow American, as a fellow human being, I deserved the same right to life, the same equal protection under the law as each and every one of you.** Yet we know that our great nation falls terribly short when it comes to protecting the most vulnerable of its' citizens.

We live in a day and time where the science of human development, including fetal pain, the power of ultrasound, and the sheer number of survivors like me (I know of 207 others just like me through my work as the founder of The Abortion Survivors Network, the overwhelming majority of whom are late term abortion survivors) clearly show the truth about life. The truth is clear.

What remains unclear, however, is what you will do in the face of this reality about life. I'm here today as one who survived a failed abortion to ask you something that tens of millions of children cannot, because abortion succeeded in ending **their** lives. **Will you protect our most vulnerable? Will you assure that children like me are provided proper and timely medical care when we are lucky enough to survive an abortion?**

I look forward to seeing how you answer these questions in the days and weeks to come.