

No. 18-1019

IN THE
Supreme Court of the United States

KRISTINA BOX, COMMISSIONER, INDIANA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, et al.,
Petitioners,

v.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD OF INDIANA AND
KENTUCKY, INC.,
Respondent.

**On Petition for a Writ of Certiorari to the
United States Court of Appeals
for the Seventh Circuit**

**BRIEF OF *AMICUS CURIAE* FOCUS ON THE
FAMILY IN SUPPORT OF PETITIONERS**

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QUESTION PRESENTED

May a State, consistent with the Fourteenth Amendment, require an ultrasound as part of informed consent at least eighteen hours before an abortion?

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INTEREST OF AMICUS CURIAE¹

Focus on the Family is a Christian ministry organization headquartered in Colorado and committed to strengthening the family in the United States and abroad by providing help and resources grounded in biblical principles. As part of that mission, Focus on the Family educates and advocates for strong protections for babies in the womb and their mothers.

In 2004, Focus established “Option Ultrasound,” a program that provides grants to pregnancy centers. These grants allow pregnancy centers to purchase ultrasound machines and train those who will perform the ultrasound examinations. Focus intends and hopes that a pregnant woman who is considering taking the life of her child and who visits one of these centers and undergoes an ultrasound examination will choose life for her baby daughter or son.

Focus supports Indiana’s effort to ensure that all pregnant women are given the truthful information that an ultrasound provides. It is only by providing expectant mothers *all* information that they are truly empowered to make a real choice.

¹ Pursuant to this Court’s Rule 37.2, all parties received timely notice of Amicus Curiae’s intent to file this brief. All parties have consented to the filing of this brief. Pursuant to this Court’s Rule 37.6, Amicus states that no counsel for any party authored this brief in whole or in part, and no such counsel or party made a monetary contribution intended to fund the preparation or submission of the brief.

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT

This Court should grant the petition and reverse the court of appeals because ultrasound examinations are effective in advancing Indiana's interests in promoting preborn human life and in encouraging childbirth over abortion. The performance of an ultrasound is "a routine part of preprocedure abortion care." Mary Gatter et al., *Relationship Between Ultrasound Viewing and Proceeding to Abortion*, 123 *Obstetrics and Gynecology* 1, 81 (2014). And Indiana conforms with this standard by requiring a woman to undergo an ultrasound examination and have the opportunity to view the image and hear the fetal heartbeat at least 18 hours before undergoing an abortion that will take her baby's life. Ind. Code § 16-34-2-1.1(a)(5).

As this Court has previously recognized, "the State has a legitimate interest in promoting the life or potential life of the unborn." *Planned Parenthood of Se. Pa. v. Casey*, 505 U.S. 833, 870 (1992). A pre-abortion ultrasound "is an invaluable tool in revealing the personhood of unborn children." *Planned Parenthood of Ind. & Ky., Inc. v. Comm'r of Ind. State Dep't of Health*, 888 F.3d 300, 313 n.3 (7th Cir. 2018) (Manion, J., concurring in the judgment in part and dissenting in part) (internal quotation marks omitted).

The district court correctly acknowledged that Indiana’s ultrasound law advances the state’s interest in promoting the life of a preborn child. *Planned Parenthood of Ind. & Ky., Inc. v. Comm’r of Ind. State Dep’t of Health*, 273 F. Supp. 3d 1013, 1031 (S.D. Ind. 2017). Affording a woman “the opportunity to view an image of her baby before making her decision, with hope that she will reflect on that image (and other information provided) and decide against abortion” is “undoubtedly a legitimate interest for the State to pursue.” *Id.*

Indiana is free to enact laws and policies that favor childbirth over abortion. There is “no limitation on the authority of the State to make a value judgment favoring childbirth over abortion.” *Maher v. Roe*, 432 U.S. 464, 473-74 (1977). Rather, “a State is permitted to enact persuasive measures which favor childbirth over abortion.” *Casey*, 505 U.S. at 866. State policies like Indiana’s ultrasound requirement—which seeks to encourage women to choose life and make childbirth “a more attractive alternative than abortion”—are constitutionally valid. *Harris v. McRae*, 448 U.S. 297, 325 (1980).

Data from Focus on the Family’s “Option Ultrasound” program and the stories of individual women confirm that ultrasound examinations advance Indiana’s interest in persuading women to choose life for their preborn children.

ARGUMENT

I. Focus on the Family’s “Option Ultrasound” program confirms that ultrasounds persuade women to choose life for their preborn children.

“Option Ultrasound” has provided grants to Indiana pregnancy centers to purchase ultrasound machines and train those who will perform examinations with this life-saving equipment. To gauge the effectiveness of its program, Focus on the Family collects data from grant recipients, including how many women at risk for abortion choose life for their preborn children after receiving counseling and undergoing ultrasounds.²

The raw data from Indiana reveals the considerable, life-affirming impact of ultrasounds. In Indiana, 861 women have received counseling and elected to undergo ultrasounds at pregnancy centers that received “Option Ultrasound” grants. Of those women, an astonishing 839—or 97%—chose life. In other words, when mothers are shown the truth about the babies growing inside their wombs before undergoing a serious medical procedure, they decide overwhelmingly not to kill their preborn daughters and sons. And that result, of course, is the very state interest that Indiana desired when it enacted its ultrasound law.

² The raw data gathered from grant recipients in Indiana is reproduced in Appendix A.

Focus on the Family's experience with its ultrasound program in Indiana is hardly unique. The National Institute of Family and Life Advocates, or NIFLA, is a national network of pro-life pregnancy centers. NIFLA was the subject of this Court's recent decision in *National Institute of Family & Life Advocates v. Becerra*, 138 S. Ct. 2361 (2018), striking down California legislation that had been pushed by abortion propagandists to infringe the free speech rights of pro-life pregnancy centers.

In 2013, NIFLA conducted a survey of its medical clinics. NIFLA asked the clinics to report the number of ultrasounds provided to abortion-at-risk patients and to tally the percentage of such patients who decided against abortion in favor of allowing their preborn children to live. The clinics reported 75,318 ultrasounds performed for pregnant patients identified as either abortion-minded or abortion-vulnerable. Of those mothers, 58,634 chose to allow their children to live, about 78%. Thomas A. Glessner, *National Survey of Pro-life Pregnancy Centers Shows Major Influence of Ultrasound on a Mother's Choice for Life*, Christian News Wire (Mar. 3, 2015), <https://bit.ly/2tHbopX>.

These results should surprise no one. Abortion providers like Respondent Planned Parenthood do everything they can to avoid referencing a mother's "baby." A "clump of cells," the "fetus," and even "the pregnancy" have all become common euphemisms for what is scientifically a living, human being.

Ultrasounds bypass deceptive medical providers and allow pregnant women to know the truth *before*

they decide whether to take their babies' lives. And as the following stories demonstrate, the truth matters.

II. Individual women affirm the effectiveness of ultrasounds in promoting Indiana's interest in preborn human life.

"Whether to have an abortion requires a difficult and painful moral decision which some women come to regret." *Gonzales v. Carhart*, 550 U.S. 124, 128-29 (2007) (citing *Casey*, 505 U.S. at 852-53). Receiving complete and accurate information on abortion is essential to the psychological and physical well-being of abortion-minded women. This Court has confirmed that such information must include "the consequences to the fetus." *Casey*, 505 U.S. at 882-83.

Ultrasounds are an important tool in providing mothers with complete and accurate information about the development and humanity of their preborn children. This is information that mothers must have before making abortion decisions. Anyone who deliberately attempts to shield pregnant mothers from understanding the true implications of an abortion procedure does not truly believe in a mother's free "choice," but rather harbors a different motivation altogether.

Every woman considering an abortion has a unique story. Many of these stories, including those provided below, portray women who did not fully appreciate the life growing within them until seeing their children on ultrasounds. Unsurprisingly, these mothers chose life for their preborn children, and they are happy they did so. These stories are powerful proof that ultrasounds effectively promote Indiana's

interest in preborn human life and in promoting childbirth over abortion.³

A. Ultrasounds reveal the humanity of preborn children.

Nicole was just 17 when she found herself pregnant for the second time. She and her boyfriend decided to use their tax-refund checks to pay for an abortion. While waiting for the checks, Nicole visited Birth Choice of Oklahoma City. A pregnancy test confirmed that she was pregnant, and Nicole was offered an ultrasound.

Nicole decided to have the ultrasound, confessing that “I wanted to see what was in me.” During the examination, Nicole “realized how real this baby already was.” She revealed, “I saw the little arms and legs. I saw the heart beat. It was a little person. At that point, I knew I couldn’t have an abortion; it’s like signing a piece of paper for someone to kill your child.” Nicole was right. In October 2007, she gave birth to her beautiful daughter, Meisha.

The same Birth Choice pregnancy center also helped 18-year-old Emma when she, too, found herself pregnant for the second time. Emma contacted Birth Choice and was offered an ultrasound. Emma accepted and was filled with “wonder and the joy ... as she saw her unborn baby move his fingers to his mouth and kick his feet.”

³ The stories summarized in this section and the next were collected from “Option Ultrasound” grant recipients and are reproduced in their entirety in Appendix B.

Emma's boyfriend did not share her excitement. He told her, "I don't care if you did see his fingers and toes. You have to have an abortion." A pregnancy center counselor offered to arrange another ultrasound so Emma's boyfriend could also view the images. He was "moved upon seeing the baby on ultrasound," and Emma and her boyfriend decided—together—to keep their baby.

Mandi was struggling with addiction to methamphetamine when she learned that she was pregnant for the second time. She called some Arizona abortion clinics and learned that, if she could provide the abortion clinic with the results of an ultrasound examination, the abortion would be less expensive. Mandi heard that Living Hope Women's Centers in Show Low provided free ultrasounds, so she made an appointment.

Mandi was dead-set on having an abortion; she only wanted the ultrasound to save money. During her ultrasound procedure, Mandi was angry and did not want to hear the explanations and descriptions that the Ultrasound Program Director was providing. Mandi remembers, "I lay on that table, listening to [the Director] talking, not wanting to be there - not wanting to be me!" But Mandi's heart softened when the Director turned the ultrasound screen toward Mandi. "That's when I saw this tiny little baby. It was like he knew I was watching. He put his little hands up and he clapped. He really clapped!" Mandi chose life and later gave birth to her son, Kendly.

B. Ultrasounds provide women with important information about their pregnancies.

Kelly was “abortion-minded” when she visited the LifeCare Pregnancy Center in Raleigh, North Carolina. After a positive pregnancy test, Kelly was offered an ultrasound, and she accepted, believing she was “just going to see a blob of tissue.” Instead, Kelly was reduced to tears when the ultrasound image came alive with a close-up image of her preborn baby’s face and the child’s arm and hand movements. Rather than having an abortion, Kelly returned to LifeCare for education and peer counseling.

Renee already had two children when she discovered that she was pregnant again. She visited First Choice Pregnancy Services, a pregnancy center in Las Vegas, Nevada, believing that abortion was her only option. Renee’s peer counselor convinced her to give herself “the gift of time” to fully consider her options and to come back to First Choice in 10 days for an ultrasound.

When Renee returned for the ultrasound, she steadfastly refused to look at the image. Her peer counselor patiently and gently encouraged her to look. After some encouragement, Renee agreed and was surprised to see the two heartbeats of her preborn twins. Renee tearfully confides, “I didn’t want any more kids right then, but I couldn’t kill two babies! I just could not do that! Seeing the ultrasound definitely changed my mind.” Renee now advises abortion-minded women, “If you are thinking about an abortion, think twice. Get an ultrasound ... and ... be sure to look at it!”

Tabatha was living on the streets and abusing crack cocaine when she discovered that she was pregnant for the third time. Unsure of where to go, Tabatha visited the Pregnancy Decision Health Centers in Columbus, Ohio. A nurse counseled Tabatha and performed an ultrasound that revealed that Tabatha was expecting twins. Pregnancy center staff helped Tabatha find drug treatment and prenatal care. She was reunited with her mother and her two young children a month later and began rebuilding her life.

Six months later, Tabatha gave birth to a healthy boy and girl. She remembers, “Through an ultrasound, [the nurse] showed me my babies. The gift of their lives returned me to mine. I have re-established my home where my children live with me, and I am in an ongoing relationship with my parents and extended family.” Tabatha was gifted with true choice.

C. Ultrasounds make a difference to abortion-clinic personnel.

The most well-known story of how an ultrasound changed the life of an abortion-clinic worker is that of Abby Johnson, a former Planned Parenthood director. She left the industry and joined the pro-life movement after watching an ultrasound of a doctor taking the life of a 13-week preborn baby. “I could see the whole profile of the baby 13 weeks head to foot. I could see the whole side profile. I could see the probe. I could see the baby try to move away from the probe.” Anne-Marie Dorning, *Planned Parenthood Clinic Director Joins Anti-Abortion Group*, ABC News (Nov. 4, 2009),

<https://abcn.ws/2Tb6Yqe>. Abby has supported life ever since.

But Abby’s story is hardly the only one. Consider Joan Appleton, who left her abortion clinic after watching an ultrasound used during an abortion to ensure the abortionist removed the entire baby, or, as the clinic called it, the “entire pregnancy.” “I saw the baby open his mouth,” recalls Joan. “I had seen [the movie] *Silent Screamer* a number of times, but it didn’t affect me – to me it was just more pro-life propaganda. But I couldn’t deny what I saw on the screen. After that procedure, I was shaking.” Sarah Terzo, *Ultrasounds Images Save Lives, Change Hearts: Here’s the Proof*, Life Site: Opinion (Feb. 7, 2013), <https://bit.ly/2C0NYQP>.

Dr. Stuart Campbell was an abortionist—until new, 3D ultrasound technology forced him to change his mind. “Even a fetus lying there dead doesn’t convey the horror that one experiences seeing a baby moving its arms and legs, opening its mouth, sucking its thumb, and then thinking, gosh, somebody wants to, you know It looks so vital. It has changed my view. I don’t think there’s any doubt about that.” Dr. Campbell’s days as an abortionist are over. *Id.*

Yet another former abortion provider is Dr. Joseph Randall, who admitted that women in abortion clinics “are never allowed to look at the ultrasound because we knew that if they so much as heard the heart beat, they wouldn’t want to have an abortion.” An ultrasound was what changed his mind, as well as two of his assistants: “And that picture, that picture of the baby on ultrasound bothered me more than anything

else[.] ... We lost two nurses. They couldn't take looking[.]” *Id.*

All these powerful stories are emblematic of the positive impact of ultrasounds on expectant mothers and medical personnel. While just a small sampling of available stories, they demonstrate that laws like Indiana’s are effective in promoting and protecting preborn life, encouraging women to choose childbirth over abortion, and even assisting abortion providers to reflect more seriously on the type of “medicine” in which they engage.

Indiana’s ultrasound law does not substantially burden a pregnant mother’s “choice” to take her baby’s life; it provides that mother with the information necessary for that choice to be a real one. In any other context, we want our medical providers to give their patients as much information as possible, so those patients can make an informed decision. It is only in the abortion clinic where it is considered permissible to shield expectant mothers from truthful information, with devastating long-term consequences for mother and child alike.

Focus on the Family urges the Court to grant the petition and affirm the right of women to true, fully-informed choice.

CONCLUSION

The petition for certiorari should be granted.

Respectfully submitted,

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MARCH 6, 2019

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APPENDIX A

“Option Ultrasound” Data for Indiana

Focus on the Family collects data from pregnancy centers that receive grants through their “Option Ultrasound” program. This data is analyzed internally and verified by an outside firm.

Terminology Definitions:

If the woman does not state intent to carry the pregnancy to term, she is considered “**at-risk.**”

A “**decision for life**” is defined by a woman’s stated intention to carry the pregnancy to term.

Indiana Raw Data:

Total at-risk clients seen: 3,923

At-risk clients who made decisions for life: 3,393

At-risk clients who made decisions for life after receiving counseling at the pregnancy centers: 2,554

At-risk clients who received counseling and ultrasounds at the pregnancy centers: 861

At-risk clients who made a decision for life after receiving counseling and ultrasounds at the pregnancy center: 839

APPENDIX B

Stories of Women Impacted by Ultrasounds

Nicole's Story

I told my friends that something just didn't feel right. I had this feeling once before, and I knew what it meant. My friends told me everything was okay—it's usual to miss a period or two right after you have a baby. But it didn't feel okay—it felt as if I was pregnant again.

I thought to myself, "I am seventeen and possibly pregnant with my second child." Who was I to turn to? My friends didn't want to talk to me about what I was feeling, and my parents had already been through enough with me having my first child at sixteen.

This was when my boyfriend and I decided the best option for both of us would be an abortion. There was no way we could raise another child. I felt as if I had already given up enough of my life for my first daughter. Nothing else was going to take away what was left in my life!

I looked up places in and out of Oklahoma that did abortions. I found out prices, and my boyfriend and I decided to use our income tax refunds to pay for the abortion. The farther along you are the more expensive an abortion becomes.

Our tax refunds took weeks and weeks to come in, and when we finally received them, I set up an

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appointment for the abortion. They told me it would be a two day procedure. That is when I decided to do some research on the computer about exactly what happens during the procedure. What I found out was so horrific—you can't even imagine what that baby goes through!

They go in with this tong looking object, and because of how far along I thought I was, they are not able to pull the baby out in one piece. No, they go in and start off with the legs. They grab hold of one leg and twist it until it comes unattached from the body and pulls it out. They do the same with the other leg, the arms and the torso. The head is last, because of its size. They crack the skull like a nut, and then bring that out in pieces also; just the thought of someone causing so much pain to my child made me break down in tears. How can someone do this for a living?

I finally told my mother that I thought I was pregnant. I also told her I wanted an abortion, but I was scared. That's when she sat down and we discussed the procedure. She said in some cases it doesn't just take the baby's life. Then, she asked me about when I took the pregnancy test and the results. I told her I never took one! She was so surprised and told me that was the first thing I needed to do.

So, we went to Birth Choice, and I took a test there. We waited for the results, and while waiting, they talked to me about other options if it was positive. I was still stuck on getting an abortion. My life was already hard enough with my daughter, and I couldn't imagine another one! It was time to read the test, and

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it said that I was pregnant. Of course, my mother and I broke down in tears; I didn't know what to think.

Then, Pat told me she could do an ultrasound if I wanted to see the baby. I agreed. I wanted to see what was in me. While doing the ultrasound, I realized how real this baby already was. I saw the little arms and legs. I saw the heart beat. It was a little person. At that point, I knew I couldn't have an abortion; it's like signing a piece of paper for someone to kill your child!

The day that I walked through the doors at Birth Choice was the same day I was supposed to go for my abortion. I am so glad I didn't. That would have been one thing I could never forgive myself for. *Now I have two beautiful daughters thanks to Birth Choice!* Things get hard sometimes having two kids under two, but at the same time, I would never give them up. I love them so much—they are my world!

Submitted by Birth Choice of Oklahoma, Inc., Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, www.birthchoice.org.

Emma's Story: "Seeing is Believing"

Emma was distraught upon hearing the news that once again she was pregnant. She was only eighteen years old, already raising one child, and there was no way she could raise another child on her own. How could she face her boyfriend? He was a first-year college student and didn't want a baby. And her parents would be angry with her for messing up again. She knew she couldn't expect any help from

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anyone else – she was working full-time and said she had to handle life on her own.

When she called Birth Choice in Oklahoma City, she was offered a free ultrasound and she accepted. The nurse watched the wonder and the joy on Emma's face as she saw her unborn baby move his fingers to his mouth and kick his feet. At that moment, Emma began to bond with her baby and experienced a change of heart.

Later that day her counselor spoke to her on the telephone and Emma said that her boyfriend told her, "I don't care if you did see his fingers and toes. You have to have an abortion." The counselor offered to arrange another ultrasound so her boyfriend could go with her, and she prayed they would keep their appointment.

Prayers were answered and Emma and her boyfriend came in for another ultrasound and left to think about what they had seen. Later that evening, the counselor spoke with Emma on the phone. The young girl was filled with joy and relief -- her boyfriend was moved upon seeing the baby on ultrasound and now they had decided to keep the baby.

How awesome is our God, the power of prayer and the old saying, "seeing is believing!"

Submitted by Barbara Chishko, Birth Choice of Oklahoma, Inc., Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, www.birthchoice.org

Mandi's Story

Mandi didn't recognize the person she had become. Her life was at its lowest point. Like so many teens in the White Mountains, Mandi thought she could do meth without any consequences. But she soon found out that meth destroys a person and all they care about. Last year she was homeless, separated from her family, and full of anger and despair. Her son was with relatives and her relationship with his father was seemingly ended as they both fell deeper into meth's vicious hold.

It was at that point the worst thing she thought was possible happened - she became pregnant. She decided there was no way she could have this baby. She had to get an abortion. Mandi called some abortion clinics and found that, if she came with an ultrasound, the abortion would be cheaper. She heard that we did free ultrasounds so she decided she would get the ultrasound, take the results to the abortion clinic and be done with this "problem."

Then she met our Ultrasound Program Director, Bonny Prouty. *"At first, I was really mad at her."* says Mandi. *"She didn't know me and I didn't want to hear what she had to say. But the anger was hard to keep up because she was so kind and caring, something I desperately needed. During the ultrasound I didn't want to see anything. I didn't want to know anything but the age of the 'fetus' so I could get an abortion. I lay on that table, listening to Bonnie talking, not wanting to be there - not wanting to be me! She checked the measurements and then she turned the*

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screen toward me. That's when I saw this tiny little baby. It was like he knew I was watching. He put his little hands up and he clapped. He really clapped!" Mandi threw her hands over her face and got down from the table, not wanting to see any more. She left and we thought we would not see her again.

As I sit across from Mandi now, lovingly nursing Kendly with the sound of Kris and Khristian in the other room laughing and playing, it is frightening to think how close this baby came to death. She and Kris are slowly rebuilding their lives. They started going to church and are in awe of God's blessings.

"What I thought was the worst problem in my life became my salvation. If I had aborted this baby, I would have sunk deeper into drugs and despair. As it was, because I decided to continue the pregnancy, I quit drugs and decided to straighten my life out. Kris took a little longer but he too decided that his family was worth it and he is doing so well. Our 'problem' is what saved us both and the reason we are a family again."

Submitted by Living Hope Women's Centers, Show Low, Arizona, lhwc@womenscpc.org.

“Kelly’s”¹ Story: “The Wave of a Hand Changes Perspective”

Recently, “Kelly,” an abortion minded young woman, came into LifeCare seeking information and

¹ “Kelly” is a pseudonym.

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counseling. After a positive pregnancy test, Kelly was offered an ultrasound, and she accepted saying, “I’m just going to see a blob of tissue.”

After the clear, water-based conducting gel was applied to her skin and the transducer was applied to the stomach area, the screen of the ultrasound jumped alive with her baby’s face very close and hands visibly waving as if to say, “Hi Mom, I’m not a blob.” Kelly did not say anything else during the session but the tears running down her cheeks spoke volumes.

Several weeks have passed since the ultrasound and Kelly has not had an abortion and continues to come to LifeCare for education and peer-counseling.

We are excited that thanks to Focus on the Family we will have a second ultrasound machine at the Gateway facility serving the college students and residents of downtown Raleigh. In addition to financial support for the machine, additional training was provided to our nursing staff and volunteer nurses.

Submitted by LifeCare Pregnancy Center, Raleigh, North Carolina, lifecarenc.org.

Renee’s² Story

When *Renee* came to First Choice Pregnancy Services, having another baby was definitely not in her plans.

² *Renee* is a pseudonym.

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She was struggling to take care of the two little girls she already had, and her youngest was only two years old. This was such a shock. She was so uncertain of her future and already felt too overwhelmed with finances and food and kids and LIFE! Another baby just was not an option right now! *Renee's* boyfriend was opposed to aborting his baby and *Renee* felt her mom would also want her to have the baby. But, realistically, it was still going to be *Renee's* responsibility to take care of this baby.

The Gift of Time

Cindy, her peer counselor, explained to *Renee* that even though her pregnancy test was positive, that did not necessarily equal a viable pregnancy. Approximately 1 in every 4 pregnancies end on their own and the abortion price would not change until 12 weeks. Based on the dates of her last menstrual period, *Renee* should only be about 6 weeks. Cindy suggested that *Renee* give herself “the gift of time.” Waiting 10 days for her ultrasound would not cost her anything more financially or physically. If her pregnancy was viable, she could still abort then.

Abortion, as hard and heart breaking as it would be, was still her plan. But what if her pregnancy was not viable? What if she did not even need an abortion? Then she would save the money, the physical risks and especially the emotional cost. Besides, then her boyfriend could not be upset either, right? *Renee* decided she would come back to First Choice and have the ultrasound. It was free after all, so this First Choice clinic certainly had nothing to gain from her.

Will She Dare to Look?

Ten days later, *Renee* returned for her scheduled ultrasound appointment. She had not changed her mind. Abortion was still her plan—if the pregnancy was viable. As *Renee* lay there on the ultrasound table, she refused to look at the flat screen TV monitor above her. As the sonographer, Kathleen, performed the ultrasound, she patiently encouraged *Renee* to look, but *Renee* adamantly refused. She just wanted Kathleen to tell her if the pregnancy was viable or not. That way, if it was viable, it would be easier to do what she needed to do.

Renee could hear Kathleen typing and clicking away. *Renee* could feel her resolve beginning to weaken. And then Kathleen said to *Renee*, “You don’t have to look, but I really think you are going to want to see what I am seeing here.” *Renee* reluctantly agreed and when she looked up, she immediately saw it—saw *them!* *Two babies!* There were *two* heartbeats! “I’m having twins!” *Renee* thought. She was overwhelmed! She felt like she was going to pass out—but she was lying down! The tears began to flow.

Today, *Renee* confides, “I didn’t want any more kids right then, but I couldn’t kill *two* babies! I just could not do that! Seeing the ultrasound definitely changed my mind.” *Renee* had a difficult pregnancy and delivered her darling little boys prematurely, a month before their due date—healthy, perfect little boys—*Stephen** weighed in at 5 lbs. 6 oz. and *Samuel** was 5 lbs. 12 oz.!

Looking Back

The pregnancy had almost cost her life. She was hospitalized and lost a lot of blood. But in spite of this, *Renee* summarized her thoughts regarding the entire process: “We’re very thankful for our beautiful babies! The staff at First Choice helped me. They guided me in the right direction. They gave me very good advice. If it weren’t for First Choice, I would have aborted. Thank you, everyone at First Choice. Thank you.” And then, *Renee* added this bit of advice: “If you are thinking about an abortion, think twice. Get an ultrasound...AND...*be sure to look at it!*”

On behalf of First Choice Pregnancy Services, we say, “Thank you Focus on the Family for Option Ultrasound!” What an honor it is to serve God and to love and serve these precious women, men and babies. Having done it both ways—*without* ultrasound and *with* ultrasound—we can tell you, having the ultrasound machine on premises makes all the difference! With more than 1600 babies’ lives spared in the past twelve months, we can testify to the difference having ultrasound available makes—it is truly life or death!

Submitted by First Choice Pregnancy Services, Las Vegas, Nevada, www.firstchoicelv.org.

Tabatha’s Story

I was raising two children, a boy and a girl. I had a job I adored, drove a decent car and had my own two

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bedroom apartment—it wasn't easy, but with my job and support from a friend at work, I was doing it. Then, I met a man with whom I fell so deeply in love. This guy was so full of life. I had never seen one person be liked by so many people. And he loved me. How lucky was I?

Five months into our relationship, I was offered crack cocaine by one of his friends and I accepted. My boyfriend had been smoking long before I met him but, somehow, he kept it from me. After a couple of months of smoking crack, I started missing work, wasn't being the mother my children had known and the man I fell so deeply in love with wasn't the same guy—and I wasn't the same woman.

Needless to say, my boyfriend moved out, my mother took my children and I lost my job, my car and then my home. Everything I loved was gone, and I had no clue how I was ever going to get it back. The one thing that never left was crack cocaine and the people I came to know through this drug. I was lost without any love and was smoking even more. I was on the streets in the cold, the rain, the heat—whatever the weather threw at me, I was in it.

This was my life for three years. My family never came looking for me, nor did I look for help from them. In the beginning, I really thought they loved me and that someone out of my very large family would try to help me, even if it would have been to tell me how disappointed I had made them. I was very close to my family and I had let them all down. So without their love, I smoked all the more. It was all I knew.

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Then came September 6, 2006, the day everything changed. I took a pregnancy test. It was positive, but everything in my life was negative. I had nothing—nothing to offer a baby. I was sick with worry. September 16th was my birthday—I hadn't heard my mother's voice in a very long time, so I called her and asked her to tell me happy birthday. She did. While talking with her, I got the nerve up to tell her I was pregnant. She asked me what I was going to do. I told her there was only one thing to do—abortion. I was on crack and homeless. She agreed.

The next couple of days I was desperately trying to figure out how I was going to find the money and a place that would do the abortion. Somehow, I went to the Pregnancy Decision Health Centers in the north end of Columbus, thinking this was where I would fix it all. I still don't know how I came to think this was the place that was going to help me get rid of this problem. I can only think that God led me there to change my mind on aborting my baby. When I told the nurse, Joann, why I was there and she said to me, "God is bigger than anything you are going through."

Then she took me into a room where she did my ultrasound. She found not one, but two babies. Oh my gosh, TWO babies!!!! I told her my mother was a twin. She knew then I couldn't abort these babies, but I was even more confused and really stressed out. She then talked to me about a place I could go for help to get off crack cocaine and for starting prenatal care. She gave me a Bible that I still have today. She asked me to say a prayer with her and I told her I couldn't. I didn't

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want to be a hypocrite. I didn't know what I was going to do once I walked out of those doors, so she said the prayer alone, aloud.

I called her the next day and asked her if she could do another ultrasound and possibly say that prayer with me. I was as ready as I could be. Maybe it would help me to see the babies again and saying that prayer surely wasn't going to hurt. I think feeling love from this stranger I had met just a day earlier gave me hope. She had such hope for me and my babies. She asked me if she could have a picture of the ultrasound to put on her refrigerator and I happily said yes. She had so much faith. And her faith gave me faith.

In December, I finally decided to call my mother and tell her where I was and that I was pregnant, with not one baby, but two. After three years of praying to God and missing my family desperately, not knowing how I would ever get back, my mother asked me if I wanted to come home and have my babies. Finally, I was going home. I'll never forget that night. I was home where I should have been all those years. It wasn't going to be easy. I was scared my children might not understand, but my parents and my children welcomed me home and accepted me and my new babies.

On March 26, 2007, I started the process of labor and delivery and my mother never left my side. My daughter Paige Kathleen was born first: 5lbs. 2 oz. – 18 inches long, blonde hair and beautiful blue eyes...PERFECT. Then, 2 minutes later, my son Peyton Wyatt, was born: 4lbs. 14oz. – 18 ½ inches

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long, brown hair and beautiful blue eyes...ALSO
PERRRFECT!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Our family was the luckiest family on this day!! All because of a place called The Pregnancy Decision Health Centers where Joann works. Through an ultrasound, she showed me my babies. The gift of their lives returned me to mine. I have re-established my home where my children live with me, and I am in an ongoing relationship with my parents and extended family.

*Submitted by Pregnancy Decision Health Centers,
Columbus, Ohio, www.pregnancyquestions.org.*