

Personal Stories that Reveal How 20-Week Abortion Bans Would Hurt Women

Nearly 99 percent of abortions occur before 21 weeks, but when they are needed later in pregnancy, it's often in very complex circumstances – the kind of situations where a woman and her doctor need every medical option available.

In fact, abortions later in pregnancy may involve rare, severe fetal abnormalities and serious risks to the woman's health.

Read the stories of women who had to make the decision to end their pregnancies – a decision that would be taken away with a 20-week ban.

Why 20-Week Bans Are Bad Policy

At 21 weeks, Jeni was told that her fetus had multiple severe defects.

Jeni R.,
Texas

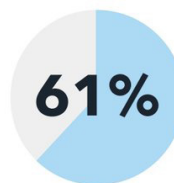


Christie B., Virginia

Christie was pregnant with her second child, a planned and wanted the pregnancy.

“My husband and I were confronted with two equally horrible options – carry the pregnancy to term and watch our baby girl suffocate to death upon birth, or end the pregnancy early and say goodbye to our much-wanted and much-loved baby girl.”

After a 20-week ultrasound, she found out her daughter would be born with a complication called congenital diaphragmatic hernia (CDH) and would suffocate at birth. She made the difficult decision of ending the pregnancy at 21 weeks.



61% of all voters say abortions should be legal after 20 weeks

Jeni R., Texas

At 21 weeks, Jeni was told that her fetus had multiple severe defects.

“It would have been too hard for me to carry to term, and it seemed pointless to make the baby suffer too when she would never survive.”

She could end the pregnancy or wait for the fetus to miscarry or die. There was no way that the pregnancy would end in a live, healthy baby.

Jeni and her husband chose to terminate the pregnancy, but because they live in Texas, they were forced to endure several cruel restrictions: a two-day waiting period, listening to a mandatory script about abortion, and a sign-off from two separate doctors.

Kate C., Massachusetts

At the 18-week ultrasound, the technician thought he saw something indicating a problem with the brain, but at the Level 2 scan, the technician found nothing wrong.

“When we make this illegal, we are just talking about making it unsafe. Because I would have done anything to get an abortion. I would have gone to a back alley if I had needed to. I believe it is my obligation as a mother to do whatever I can to make a terrible situation [for my children] better. I did that for my daughter. I resent it very much when politicians try to force me to carry a very sick baby to term and watch her die a slow and tortured death just because it fits their – and not my – religious sensibilities.”

But Kate was nervous and insisted on another Level 2 scan during her third trimester. It turned out that her baby had moderate to severe Dandy-Walker syndrome as well as another brain malformation. If she survived, she would have had trouble swallowing and breathing, and she would have been afflicted by seizures, vomiting, choking, and muscle spasms. Her short life would have been filled with suffering. Kate and her husband flew across the country to Colorado for the abortion.

Lindsey S., California

When Lindsey had her 12-week ultrasound, everything looked completely normal. But the picture was different at the 21-week anatomy scan.

“If I had carried her to term, she would not have survived anyway. As her mother, it is my right to spare her suffering, and that is what I did.”

Lindsey and her husband learned that their baby had a lethal skeletal dysplasia. Lindsey sought out additional opinions from three maternal-fetal specialists, and they all agreed that her baby would not survive because her lungs were not developing properly.

Lindsey and her husband chose to terminate the pregnancy with a labor induction at close to 24 weeks. They feel grateful that they had the choice to end their baby’s life with compassion.

Danielle S., New York

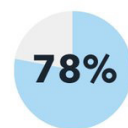
Danielle’s pregnancy was going well and was considered low-risk. A mother of two, she had all the tests and scans, none of which indicated any problem.

“What my husband and I experienced was just so horrible. Unless people have walked in my shoes, they don’t understand. I did what was right for my son and my family, and it’s no one else’s business.”

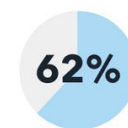
But in the 29th week, she learned that her baby had multiple brain problems, including unilateral brain swelling, brain asymmetry, malformed cerebellum, and no corpus callosum.

If her baby lived to term, he would have a life of suffering. Danielle had to fly across the country to New Mexico for the procedure.

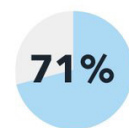
The majority of voters – say this is the wrong issue for Congress and their state legislators to be spending time on.



Democrats



Republicans



Independents

Jenni L., Michigan

At the 18-week ultrasound, Jenni and her husband were told that their son had a severe brain malformation.

“Deciding to end my much-wanted pregnancy was difficult and deeply sad, but also deeply personal. At no point during this process did I consider my legislators a part of the conversation. I listened to my doctors, genetic counselors, my family, and my heart.”

For the next few weeks, Jenni visited maternal-fetal specialists and genetic counselors, learning that their son was unlikely to survive full-term. She terminated at 21 weeks.

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