

parents did not talk to me about personal relationships, sex, reproduction, or contraception. My situation is not an isolated one. I had several friends in rural Nebraska. We did not speak in depth of what was happening in our homes, but knowing each other, reinforced the concept that we were living out typical, normal lives. I left home when I was 18 determined to distance myself from this family. When I was 19 I was forced to return home. Shortly after returning home I found I was pregnant. My feeling at the time was one of total panic. There was no way I could turn to my parents for support. My father had drawn a knife and threatened to kill the man I had been involved with when he forced me to return home and at that time he did not know I was pregnant. I had no way of knowing what his reaction would be if, in fact, I told him I was pregnant. I was terrified of his anger, I was terrified of the very real threat of physical violence. I don't know if the members of this committee can understand the feelings of terror that someone experiences in that kind of situation. Abortion was illegal at the time and the only person that I knew of who could perform abortions was a sleazy person who lived in the outskirts of Kearney. I ran away from home. I contacted Social Services. I lived in a group home. I carried my baby to term. I gave him up for adoption. The State of Nebraska subsidized my existence during that time. During those seven months my life was a living hell. I was constantly afraid that my father would find me. I was ashamed of the situation I was in. I felt totally, helplessly alone. I was, in fact, trapped by the way I had been brought up. If an abortion had been legal, if it had been discreet, I would have taken that option. I don't know that I would have been able to go through a courtroom procedure to obtain one. If you look around this room, the microphones, the desk, the people here, you're familiar with the situation, but a teenager with limited resources, limited social skills and experience, this would be a nightmare. It's frightening for me even now. There was no way I could have received a confidential hearing at the Buffalo County Courthouse. I couldn't agree more. And think about it. There is just no way. I can't imagine asking my mother to bring me to Lincoln to bring me to the courthouse for some period of time without having to involve her and that would have meant danger if I had done that. I would have been in a very real physical danger if my parents had known about my pregnancy. I carry scars on my body from living in my family as it is. I am not an isolated situation. I grew up with people in similar situations. The effect of this legislation will be a punishment for some of those who are most