

April 3, 1990

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator McFarland, please.

SENATOR MCFARLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think you could argue either way as you are voting on a procedural issue or you are voting on the abortion issue because the abortion issue underlies it. Certainly, you could justify your vote either way and not have it directly impact on your views of abortion, but I think that is the focused issue here, and it will be the focused issue, I believe, for years afterward because I truly believe that the abortion debate is a debate on one of the...on the most important moral issue of our time. It is the most important moral issue since slavery. It is an issue that will not go away, and whether we act this year or next year or the year after, at some point, I am confident that people are going to start saying, end this tragedy, enact limitations, allow persons to consider what they are doing and realize what they are doing. At first glance the notion of choice has a certain superficial appeal and we can debate that issue and the extremists on either side can see it as a philosophical decision. And you can argue on it philosophically, but I think sometimes we get lost and we don't hear the voices of the people who are directly impacted by it, and those are the voices of the women who have been through the abortion process, who may be too ashamed or too intimidated to come forth and speak their views about the whole issue because they see it from a realistic point of view because they have been through it. And a number of them have contacted me by letter and by telephone call, and visiting with them personally, and I am sure a number of you have received a number of the same letters yourselves and may have been contacted. I would just like to recite what one aborted woman has said regarding the issue of choice and hope that you will consider it as we go through this process. She said that contrary to the popular slogan "Freedom of Choice" women who have experienced it know that abortion is seldom, if ever, free choice. Indeed, legalized abortion has become a tool for the manipulation and exploitation of women. Many of these women were forced to abort by boy friends and husbands who begged and threatened them to "do the sensible thing." Some were forced to abort by insistent parents. Others were intimidated into abortion by physicians who are afraid of malpractice suits or social workers seeking to reduce the welfare roles. Still others felt forced to abort because of the social prejudice against unwed mothers or because of a social insistence that they handle their problems alone. But whatever the pressure they faced, all of these women felt backed into a corner and saw abortion as the only way out. They