



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

February 17, 2009

The Editor
Isthmus
101 King St.
Madison WI 53703

Dear Editor:

Regarding the opinion piece, “Why not make abortions easier” (Feb. 13), Ruth Conniff misconstrues much of the opposition to performing second-trimester abortions at the Madison Surgery Center.

We oppose this plan not because we wish to increase a pregnant woman’s “anguish and hardship,” but because we believe that pregnant women in turmoil and their preborn children deserve better than abortion; they deserve support. We believe that where there is despair, disability, and poverty, the community needs to respond with hope, love, and solidarity.

Moreover, we know that second-trimester abortions are frequently performed when the preborn child is diagnosed with a serious or fatal abnormality. Nationwide, over 80 percent of preborn children diagnosed with Down syndrome and other serious disabilities are aborted, this despite breathtaking medical and technological advances that enable people with disabilities to live productive and meaningful lives.

What does this say about our humanity, about our acceptance of diversity? In a city that rightly prides itself on helping the most vulnerable, what message are we sending to people with disabilities when we turn a blind eye to the systematic elimination of preborn children with special needs?

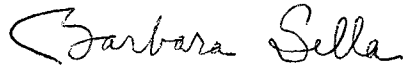
Around the country, communities are coming up with new ways to address the needs of mothers and children in crisis. Perinatal hospice programs are helping families cope with the profound grief and loss when their child is diagnosed with a fatal abnormality (www.perinatalhospice.org). Instead of performing abortions in our medical facilities, why can’t our Madison hospitals establish perinatal hospice care so that parents and their children can be supported? Why can’t our community provide expectant parents with the necessary education and resources to care for a child with special needs? Why can’t we publicize the readiness of so many couples to adopt children—with or without special needs—and give them the opportunity to thrive?

Like Ms. Conniff, many of us who are pro-life have chosen to live in Madison because it is such a healthy and welcoming community in which to raise our children. Some of us are the parents

of children with special needs. Some of us are the parents of children who were born to women in turmoil. All of us know children who were born in less than ideal circumstances.

We oppose the opening of a second-trimester abortion clinic because we want all children to be welcomed in this compassionate and nurturing community of ours. We want all mothers to know that they have life-giving options that will permit them and their children to thrive. And we want children with disabilities and their families to know that their presence enriches us all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Sella". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the left of the typed name.

Barbara Sella

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