

# Legal Abortion Here? 34 Testify Pro And Con

By MARGARET MILLER  
Women's Editor

"I had an abortion last year," a chic young woman told a State Senate hearing in Plymouth Monday.

"I had not had German measles, though two doctors were glad to sign letters saying that I had. I'm 30 years old, and the reason for the abortion was that my husband and I decided we did not want another baby -- we want to adopt an older child later."

"I did what was best for my family. The tragedy was that I was not able to go to my own doctor and tell him what I told another."



SEN. ALVIN DEGROW  
Conducts hearing

and not just emotionalism.

Her personal favoring of reform she underlined with the statement:

"We're not advocating abortion -- we want to give women the right to choose."

**THE UNWANTED CHILD** The battered child the right to decide the rights of children. Freedom of religion. Accepting moral responsibility. Sacredness of human life. The population.

These were some of the terms heard frequently in the 2 1/2 hours of testimony as individuals and as representatives of organizations stepped to the stand.

The first two witnesses opposed change.

What excuse is there for taking life because someone had an unfortunate accident?" asked Mrs. Violet Lantz, mother of 10 from Union Lake.

"This generation will go down in history as the greatest proponent of life. Let us not be guided by those who do not love life."

Mrs. Paul Benson read a statement by her husband, who is a Plymouth obstetrician and gynecologist.

"Abortion is morally wrong, and though an unwanted pregnancy is unfortunate, two wrongs do not make a right," the statement said.

SEN. DEGROW questioned several of the witnesses after they offered their testimony. Two of these were Mrs. Sandra

McLennan of Plymouth, a doctoral student at the University of Michigan and a staff member at the Plymouth State Home, and Dr. Elspeth Reagan of Northville, a pediatrician employed in the inner-city Comprehensive Neighborhood Health Center.

Mrs. McLennan had said she was "concerned for the rights of children, abandoned, abused and unwanted and perhaps growing up to have more unwanted children," and also said she worried about "the brothers and sisters of the unwanted children, the life already existing."

Under questioning by the senator, she said she felt many of the wards in the state home would not have been born if abortion had been a choice.

Dr. Reagan, asked if she sees unwanted children in the course of her work in the inner-city center, told DeGrowth: "I don't ask; there's too much to do. But I see many children whose parents cannot care for them and I feel sure they wish they didn't have them."

Dr. Reagan also said those favoring abortion reform should start giving some consideration to the way it would be handled, and suggested the matter might eventually be a matter of public health, without cost or covered by insurance.

"With the new aspiration method," she added, "there's now doubt as to whether there should be any law requiring that it be done in an accredited hospital. The doctor's office could be a suitable place."

SEVERAL STUDENTS from high school and Madonna College gave their views.

Miller, Plymouth High senior, said he knew of three girls who had become pregnant in recent months and one had an illegal abortion followed by a serious emotional problem.

Sen. DeGrowth asked if Miller thought the emotional problem would have been as present in a legal abortion.

"No, sir, I don't," he said. "It would have been better if she could have gone with her parents to a doctor."

MADONNA SENIORS Joanne Straebien and Christine Tanasek testified against liberalizing abortion laws.

"As a woman, I've been given the great privilege of bearing children," Joanne said. "How would I explain it to my other children if I were to have an abortion?"

Christine stated: "It isn't fair to society to say which person will live. We don't know what each will contribute."

Ann Arbor grandmother Mildred Sergeant said the present law "is an abridgment of freedom of religion" and added:

"I am interested in saving lives -- actual lives, not academically questionable ones."

TWO PLYMOUTH MOTHERS favored the present law and spoke of accepting responsibility.

Mrs. Nancy Browne, mother of 10 stated: "I should accept responsibility for our acts -- maybe we don't like the consequences but we enjoyed the privilege."

Said Mrs. Dorothy Oullette, mother of five:

"If it were my daughter, I would want her to bear her child. It would make her a better person."

Mrs. Esther Friedrichs of Livonia who has six children, voiced deep concern over the population explosion and added:

"I feel guilty at times that we've indulged in this much contribution to the population."

She also said four of her children are college age and "they are responsible individuals whom I respect. I think if

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(Observer photos by Harry Mauthe)

there were an unwanted pregnancy, they would feel abortion was a course to be considered."

TWO PROFESSIONALS in service fields, public health nurse Alice Cook and social worker John Suttinger, spoke strongly for a change in law.

"I have seen many children poorly cared for," stated Mrs. Cook. "and I have many times been unable to assist a mother determined to have an abortion. Health should be a right and not a privilege."

Suttinger said the Haron Valley chapter of the American Association of Social Workers is planning to lobby for a change in law.

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## The Observer Women



CAROLYN EPSTEIN  
"I had abortion"



CHESTER MILLER  
Friends troubled



MRS. NANCY BROWNE  
"Accept responsibility"

### Musicales To Attend Hootenany

Hawaiian Hootenany is the program for the Jan 29 potluck buffet dinner of the Farmington Musicales. Members and their husbands will attend the evening beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the Nardin Park Methodist Church on 11 Mile Road in Farmington.

The Lutheran Chorales of Livonia, directed by Jerry List, will appear in the program. Musicales member Mrs. Marie Walk is conductor for the program.

Mrs. Louis Noetzel is program chairman, while Mrs. Robert Stevens is chairman of the hostesses.

### U-M Alumnae To See 'Dolly'

The Detroit Association of University of Michigan Women will sponsor a theater party for the film "Hello, Dolly!" in the Americana Theater, Greenfield and Nine Mile, at 6:15 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 25.

Tickets for \$5 may be reserved with Elizabeth Long, 1438 Chicago, Detroit, 48208, and will be mailed before the performance.

The film is directed by Gene Kelly and stars Barbra Streisand and Walter Matthau.

### m.m. memos

Each year at this time, a discouraging story comes across my desk.

It's the announcement of the annual search for a mother of the year, and to edit it I must read the requirements.

There's the rub. I realize I wouldn't qualify even to be mother of the day, let alone the year.

Let's see. The lady honored should embody courage, cheerfulness, patience, affection, understanding and homemaking ability. Quite an order.

She should have a sense of responsibility in civic affairs and be active in public service to society. Well, I vote and buy a Goddell paper.

Be a legal mother and not a divorcee. Now, THERE! I'm on solid ground.

And then I read that last requirement--have no children under 15. Well, what do you know--I don't qualify anyway. So I don't have to embody courage or cheerfulness or patience or affection or understanding or homemaking ability after all.

Once, though, I met one of those paragons who was selected mother of the year and decided she had a rare sense of humor in addition to all her other virtues.

The occasion was a luncheon, and she was one of several lady celebrities being interviewed on stage by a feminine telecaster of local fame. Our interviewer talked to each woman in turn, and as an opening gambit asked how she happened to enter her particular line of work.

Came time for Mother of the Year, and she turned the tables.

"I hope," she told her surprised questioner, "that you aren't going to ask me how I happened to become a mother!"

—Margaret Miller

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