



**WISCONSIN FAMILY ACTION**  
Marriage|Family|Life|Liberty

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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 923  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS,  
LEGAL REVIEW & CONSUMER PROTECTION – TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2022  
MICAH PEARCE, EXEC. VICE PRESIDENT**

Thank you, Chairman Stroebel and committee members, for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 923. I am Micah Pearce, Executive Vice President of Wisconsin Family Action. Wisconsin Family Action supports this bill with one caveat.

A heartbeat... a human heartbeat. Is there anything that bespeaks life more powerfully than a heartbeat? That is what this bill is about—human life, its dignity, its worth, its protection.

Because this bill is modeled quite closely after the very well-known Texas Heartbeat bill, little will be said today that is new. Suffice it to say that the bill creates a very bright line for when an abortion cannot happen—once a heartbeat is detected, which is indeed right and appropriate. Our current laws which both requires an ultrasound and also bans abortion after twenty-weeks’ gestation certainly help protect babies from the indescribable pain and horror of an abortion; but we believe these unborn babies feel pain much earlier than 20 weeks. We know beyond a shadow of a doubt that at conception a baby is as human as it will ever be—it just needs time and the right environment to grow and develop. And, again, once a heartbeat is detectable, there is no doubt that the baby is alive, growing and developing.

As a state, we are always about—or should always be about—protecting our most vulnerable. An unborn baby with a detectable heartbeat qualifies as “most vulnerable.” Our law should reflect this priority of protecting our most vulnerable. This law, by and large, does that.

Our one caveat has to do with the medical emergency exception. Admittedly, the authors have done a far better than average job of narrowing the definition of “medical emergency” than we typically encounter in pro-life bills that include exceptions. That said, fundamentally we do not believe it is ever necessary to kill the baby to save the mother. Medical professionals tell us it is no longer “either-or,” but “both-and”—meaning, with medical advancements, it is possible to save both the mother and the baby. If the baby dies as a result of doing medical treatments designed to save the life of the mother, that is far different from intentionally killing the baby in an effort to save the mother. We would prefer to see this bill without this exception. However, we understand the intention of the bill and believe it will save many babies, as it has in Texas, even with this medical emergency exception. Our hope is that the wording is tight enough to not allow crafty abortion providers a way to work around this wording and deem many situations where a baby’s heartbeat has been detected as a “medical emergency” and thus the baby is aborted..

Other than this caveat, we support the provisions in this bill, including allowing any citizen who is knowledgeable about an abortion being illegally done under the prohibitions of this proposal, to bring a lawsuit against the provider. We also agree with the requirement that an allegation that a physician violated either prohibition in the bill is considered an allegation of unprofessional conduct, and the Medical Examining Board is required to investigate allegations of unprofessional conduct. We believe that is appropriate given that we are talking about taking a human life that has a detectable heartbeat.

We urge the committee to pass this bill and move it soon to the full Senate for a vote.

Thank you for your time today and for your careful consideration of our position on this bill.