

Anne Hafner

Combined Locks, WI

June 2nd, 2015

Distinguished Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee and Assembly Health Committee,

I always wanted to be a mom. At Marquette University I was studying to be an Intensive care unit nurse when I met my husband Dan, who was studying to be an Emergency room PA. We married after obtaining our degrees and began to work on starting a family. After three painful miscarriages, we were pregnant again, with our son Bryce. After our previous losses, it was hard to be optimistic with this pregnancy.

The first few months passed slowly. As the five-month ultrasound approached, panic set in and the "what if" game began. But to our sheer joy, from the ultrasound we learned that the baby looked fine. It was then my heart began celebrating for what was to come. We began preparing and I began to feel the baby move inside me. The baby's room was soon filled with yellow and blue, a new crib and dresser were assembled. We were very, very excited.

Our 35 week appointment came. I felt great. The baby was moving inside of me. We were just over a month until we got to meet our baby face-to-face. During our appointment, the doctor told us he thought the baby was breech. Despite my fear of having a c-section, I knew this was only a minor challenge. To confirm his suspicions, he decided to do an ultrasound. Once it was complete, the doctor turned to Dan and I and said, "Do you know what hydrocephalus is?" We began to cry as we shook our heads yes. Our unborn baby had water on the brain – a terrible diagnosis. We were sent to a specialist the next morning.

The drive home was overwhelming. We asked ourselves, "Did we not go through enough? How could this have happened?" Tuesday morning couldn't come soon enough as Dan and I anxiously awaited the specialist to give us hope. Unfortunately, we received just the opposite. We were told that our baby was missing part of his brain, and would not survive. The doctor told us that we had the option of "terminating the pregnancy" because my life would be in jeopardy if the baby was delivered vaginally. But I refused.

I couldn't cause my child pain from abortion, and I was going to give him the most love a baby could have in his short life on this earth.

Soon the time came, and my water broke. I called my doctor and he said we needed to go to Madison for delivery. My parents offered to drive us. Rain was pouring down that night as we made the two hour ride to Madison. Along with the rain were tears from my eyes. For now, our baby was safe and alive – moving and hiccupping quietly in my womb.

When we arrived, specialists confirmed that our baby would indeed die shortly after birth. In addition to the news, the doctor informed us that due to the excess fluid they may have to make a c-section incision so large that we would not be able to have any more children. Under the circumstances,

the specialist informed us again the best option would be to decompress the baby's head, killing him and allowing me to deliver naturally – giving us a chance to try again to have a family.

Appalled, we hastily informed her that we would never kill our baby no matter what the outcome. We were numb with grief and very upset to hear such a thought.

At 6:28 am the doctor announced, "It's a boy!"

No cries. No squeaks. No movement. With deafening silence, my baby was baptized by the hospital chaplain. He continued not to move, not to breathe, the only thing that showed that he was alive was his heart beat. The doctor said to Dan, "you better get him to his mom, his heart rate is dropping." Dan placed my baby's face by mine.

I was a mom...holding my child. My baby was blue and lifeless, but he was mine. I loved him so much, even though I knew his life would be brief.

Moments later, Dan noticed his color changing and then we heard our baby boy declare his presence as he let out his first scream.

Thirteen long minutes after he was born, our son took his first breath. He was here, a child to hold and love, and he was alive.

The doctors warned us that after 13 minutes with no oxygen, and severe hydrocephalus, Bryce would suffer seizures and many neurological complications throughout his life. None of this ever occurred.

The next day the doctors performed an MRI on Bryce's brain – and his entire brain was there. The doctor who counseled me to abort my baby came to visit my room, with the original ultrasound where Bryce's brain was missing. She stated, "in this picture your baby's brain was missing. But, now we know your son's brain is intact."

Today, Bryce is eleven years old and doing terrific. He is in fifth grade and does very well in school. He also loves to play basketball and baseball. He just started playing on his school's basketball team this year. The boy that was supposed to die after birth, the boy who would never function...he is alive and well, and nothing but a joy to our lives.

I cannot imagine what would have happened if we allowed our son to lose his life to abortion, especially when he could feel pain in the womb. I cannot imagine the pain I would have felt.

Every single second of my son's life matters - no matter its length or what condition he could be living with. I am so happy the Wisconsin Legislature is considering the *Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act* to help protect unborn babies like my son and support parents who receive similar prenatal diagnosis.

I wish every parent, even those who lose their little ones, could have the support of the medical community in those situations with perinatal hospice, and that all of them could have the privilege of holding their little ones no matter how brief. You never know what may happen.

Thank you for your time,

Anne Hafner

Distinguished Members of the Health and Human Services Committee
and Assembly Health Committee,

My name is Bryce Hafner. I am 11 years old and am in 5th grade. I love to play basketball, baseball, and be a big brother to my little sisters.

I would like to first thank you for all of the hard work you do down here in Madison.

Second, I would like to ask each one of you to please pass the bill that would not allow doctors to hurt the babies.

Please give kids like ME the chance to LIVE.

Thank you for your time!

Bryce Hafner