

**Virginia House of Delegates**  
**Courts of Justice - Subcommittee #1**  
**January 30, 2023**

Testimony of in support of HB 1795  
Robin Sertell, Education Coordinator  
Abortion Survivors Network

\*\*\*NOTES\*\*\*

Delegates, thank you permitting me to address this committee in support of HB 1795, a piece of legislation that is very important to me. My name is Robin Sertell. Before I was born, I survived three abortion attempts via saline infusion. I spent most of my life believing I was the only person in the world who had ever survived an abortion attempt—let alone three. However, I was both relieved and sad to learn that I am not alone. In fact, more than thirty years ago, Dr. Willard Cates, then Chief of Abortion Surveillance for the Centers for Disease Control stated that 400-500 live births occurred after abortion each year. This means that after 49 years of legalized abortion, there are between 19,600 and 24,500 babies that survived abortion in this country alone<sup>i</sup>. To be blunt, there are thousands of people like me who have survived the trauma of abortion.

The fact that I was born alive after multiple failed abortion attempts doesn't imply that born alive legislation is not necessary. In fact, the reason I am here today is to use my voice and my painful experience to implore you to do everything you can to protect other abortion survivors, just as you would any other marginalized person.

All babies born alive after an attempted abortion have already experienced significant trauma, and deserve care just like any other victim of physical and emotional trauma. Consistent and accurate reporting is critical to understand the depth and breadth of this trauma and ultimately end the cycle of violence preying upon our society<sup>ii</sup>. Every child should be protected, regardless of whether an abortion was performed upon them or not.

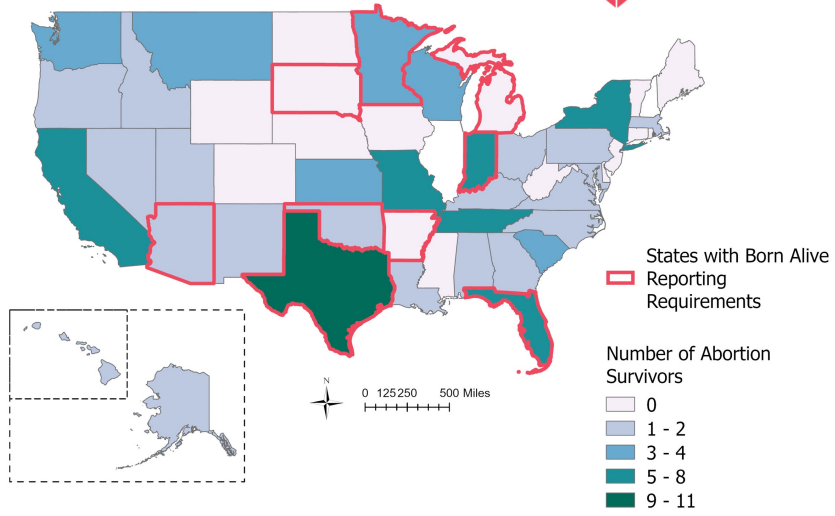
I urge the members of this committee to uphold your oath to the Constitution and the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia, which states the right to “the enjoyment of life and liberty... and obtaining happiness and safety.” I support HB 1795. Thank you, Committee.

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<sup>i</sup> Liz Jeffries and Rick Edmonds, “Abortion: The Dreaded Complication,” Philadelphia Inquirer (Aug. 2, 1981).

<sup>ii</sup> Reporting Requirements and Abortion Survivors

# Survivors in Contact with the Abortion Survivors Network



Esri, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, EPA