

Good morning and thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to you today.

My name is Nicolle Reslock. I live in Grand Ledge with my son, Gabe, who is with me here today. We are both here to express our support for House Bills 4616, 4617 and 4618.

As a registered nurse, it is my duty to protect and preserve the sanctity of human life in mid-Michigan. That commitment is sacred to me.

The same education that helped me see the warning signs of diabetes in my son when he was just 17 months old doesn't allow me to understand why Michigan law prohibits embryonic stem cell research procedures that can be performed legally in most other states. Especially when in Michigan we are allowing those same embryos to be treated as medical waste and be discarded.

I want to thank the Michigan House Judiciary Committee for holding this hearing today. The legislation introduced by Representative Mark Meadows of East Lansing and Representative Andy Meisner of Ferndale would give Michigan residents who have used in vitro fertilization the choice of whether they want to donate their unused embryos for stem cell research that could someday lead to a treatment for children like my son.

For Gabe's sake, I urge you to approve this life-giving legislation. It's important for supporters of embryonic stem cell research to let the elected officials who represent us know what is at stake when they decide this issue.

The cells researchers want to use to find cures for diseases such as diabetes, Parkinson's, spinal cord injuries, multiple sclerosis — the list goes on and on — are already doomed to be destroyed.

Those cells could go toward possible treatments for diseases that are going to kill my now 9-year-old son someday, as well as thousands of other children. Currently, diabetes accounts for 810 deaths every 24 hours. It is incomprehensible to me how those who oppose this research say they are protecting life when their beliefs jeopardize the lives of so many innocent children.

Our state is blessed to have some of the best and brightest researchers in the world. Gabe and I are hopeful that someday, researchers in Michigan may find a cure for diabetes and other diseases. If embryonic stem cell research is allowed to proceed, we pray the medical advances will help us to avoid the fate of Gabe's grandfather, who, amongst other horrible complications, had both legs amputated before dying at the age of 55 of diabetes.

It is important that scientists in Michigan be allowed the same opportunities as those in other states, including Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin and many others, to conduct research using embryonic as well as adult stem cells.

State laws limiting research in Michigan means that research and jobs are being created in other states, while saving not one embryo. Preventing Michigan businesses and academics from researching and using all the tools we have at our disposal delays the chance to find a cure.

I am dedicated to finding a cure for diabetes through advocacy, awareness, education and empowerment and by stressing the need for all forms of stem cell research. Gabe and I have been fortunate as we have been able to find our voice and meet other families like us dealing with this disease when we traveled to Washington D.C. and attended Children's Congress this year. We will continue to raise our voice and ask that you really understand what is at stake by not proceeding with this critical research. This mission includes asking Michigan's lawmakers to think of Gabe and other afflicted children until they vote to change Michigan's archaic ban on embryonic stem cell research techniques that are used in other states.

Gabe: "Hi, my name is Gabe and I am in 3rd Grade at Holbrook Elementary. I have diabetes. Without a cure my future is uncertain and stem cell research gives me HOPE. Please promise to remember me."

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak to you today and express our support for House Bills 4616 through 4618.