

**TESTIMONY OF JENNIFER MAAS BEFORE THE HUMAN SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON S.B. 1343 CONCERNING COMPASSIONATE CARE
FOR VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT**

MARCH 13, 2007

Good afternoon, Senator Harris and Representative Villano, and members of the Human Services Committee.

My name is Jennifer Maas from St. Paul, Minnesota. I am the daughter of Cindi Speltz. I am 31 years old and a wife and mother of four month old Leopold.

If this bill had been enacted 32 years ago, when my mother suffered a sexual assault, I, and my son, might not be here today to greet you.

I first began to recognize that I had a story to tell when I was attending Junior High School. I distinctly remember one day as I walked down the hall with some friends and one said, "I don't like abortion, I think it is wrong . . . but we have to keep it legal for cases of rape and incest."

These words hit me at the core of my being.

My mother had been slowly revealing the circumstances of my conception to me over the years and by the time I was 13, I understood and had to come to grips with the reality that my biological father was, essentially, a rapist. He had violated my mother against her will.

When my mom found out she was pregnant the only advice she was given was to discard the "products of conception." Needless to say, I am eternally grateful that she heeded that still small voice in her heart that told her that the life growing within her had a purpose and did not merit death.

Let's not fool ourselves: human life, individual, unique and unrepeatable, begins at fertilization. If my mother had been offered the abortifacient "Plan B" in the distressing and traumatic aftermath of suffering a criminal sexual assault, especially if it is offered under the guise, as it is proposed in this bill, of merely "preventing a pregnancy," I probably wouldn't be here to tell you - I am so glad to be here.

As my 32nd birthday approaches I am ever-discovering God's magnificent plan, not only for my life, but for every life He calls into existence. It is crucial that every citizen realize that a person's dignity is not founded on whether he or she is wanted or unwanted, planned or unplanned - our dignity is rooted in something far greater than that. The circumstances of my, yours, or anyone's conception, does not determine quality of life. Thank you.