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## Failed abortion makes case for overriding veto

By Julia Duin  
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Nineteen years ago this month, Gianna Jessen lay gasping in an abortion clinic, the survivor of a saline abortion at 7½ months.

Yesterday afternoon, the blonde limped before the House Judiciary subcommittee on the Constitution to describe her arrival as an unwelcome guest of a 17-year-old mother.

"I am the person that she aborted," Miss Jessen told a roomful of listeners, "and I lived instead of died. Some have said I am a 'botched abortion,' a result of a job not well done."

Wearing a long, light-blue dress to hide the twisted legs the procedure left her, she described how she required four surgeries and years of therapy before she could walk.

"I am happy to be alive. I almost died," she said. "Every day I thank God for life."

Miss Jessen got cerebral palsy from swallowing the concentrated salt solution used in a saline abortion to burn the fetus' skin and internal organs. Called "candy-apple babies" because their skin turns bright red from the burns, these fetuses often thrash for hours before being expelled.

She lingered between life and death for three months, was sent to foster care and was eventually adopted by Diana De Paul, the daughter of her foster mother.

Miss Jessen said she has met other survivors, such as a 2-year-old named Sarah who also has cerebral palsy.

"She is blind and has severe seizures," Miss Jessen said. "The abortionist, besides injecting the mother with saline, also injects the baby victims. Sarah was injected in the head."

Miss Jessen, who begged her listeners to spare more children from ending up like her, was Exhibit A of a failed abortion. Rep. Charles T. Canady, Florida Republican, convened the hearing to examine *Roe vs. Wade*, the landmark 1973 Supreme Court decision.

Of the 13 members on the subcommittee, only two — Republicans Henry J. Hyde of Illinois and Mr. Canady — attended, even though there no House votes yesterday.

Mr. Canady hopes Congress will override President Clinton's veto of the Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act, a bill that targets a procedure in which a fetus is delivered feet-first up to its head and has its brain sucked out through a catheter. The congressman attacked the premise of Mr. Clinton's veto — that the Constitution, as interpreted by *Roe vs. Wade*, protects partial-birth abortions.

Mr. Canady said *Roe vs. Wade* only deals with fetuses, not with partially born children. In support of Mr. Canady, panelists such as Douglas Kmiec, a University of Notre Dame constitutional law professor, questioned the constitutional basis of *Roe vs. Wade*.



Gianna Jessen tells a House panel about the lasting effects of the abortion tried when she was a fetus. Photo by Cathaleen Curtiss/The Washington Times

Harvard law professor Mary Ann Glendon said *Roe vs. Wade* does not provide a constitutional right for partial-birth abortions.

"*Roe* says nothing about the killing of a baby during delivery," she said, and Mr. Clinton "made the mistake of thinking a maternal health provision for the Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act was constitutionally necessary."

She said the Supreme Court left intact a statute in Texas, where *Roe vs. Wade* originated, that outlawed killing a child "in the state of being born." The statute still exists.

Other panelists, such as Miss Jessen, spoke about what happens when the result of an abortion is a living child. A Michigan nurse, Sharon Dunsmore, told of cradling an extremely premature boy who survived an abortion but died in her arms.

Subcommittee member Patricia Schroeder, Colorado Democrat, boycotted the hearing, saying it was only meant to "undermine the public's consistent and overwhelming support for *Roe vs. Wade*" and assist a "massive public relations campaign."