

# THE HARD CASES

**New Facts. New Answers.**

## AFTER ASSAULT ...

**“We have not been asked to tell our side of the story.”**

“Why do even pro-lifers talk about exceptions for rape and incest as if that is a way to have ‘compassion’ for the mother? If you really want to be compassionate ... give this mother the opportunity to choose life.”

**“Denise,” Incest Victim, Victim of a Forced Abortion**

“I feel personally assaulted and insulted every time I hear that abortion should be legal because of rape and incest ... we’ve not been asked to tell our side of the story.”

**Kathleen DeZeeuw, Rape Survivor, Mother**

A Baltimore man used up to 10 abortions to hide the sexual abuse of his three daughters. At least five abortions took place at the same clinic. The girls were returned to their rapist’s custody.

**“Forced Abortion in America” Report, [www.TheUnChoice.com](http://www.TheUnChoice.com)**

## INSIDE ...

**“I was violated again by the abortionist.”**

Women victimized by sexual assault deserve our full support. They are petitioning Legislators to hear their side of the story. Most say abortion is not the answer.

- **DENISE’S STORY**  
“I was never given a choice.”
- **ABORTION ONLY INTENSIFIES THEIR PAIN**  
70% had their babies; none regretted their decision.  
78% of those who aborted regretted the abortion.<sup>1</sup>
- **ASK WOMEN WHO’VE BEEN THERE**  
Petition for Public Hearings Signed by Assault Victims

*Elliot*  
INSTITUTE

[www.afterabortion.org](http://www.afterabortion.org)

## The Hard Cases — Denise’s Story

### “Please don’t let them be assaulted again.”

#### “I was never given a choice.”

“That child has no voice, no defense, no chance ... unless we offer real love and real compassion to the mother. ... Don’t let them be exploited again by someone who will make a profit from their dead child -- a memory that will haunt them for the rest of their lives.”

Although she is actively pro-life, Denise says that very few people know her story and that it is still very difficult to share. When she was 15, Denise was raped by her father, who then forced her to have an abortion. Like 78% of those who have had abortions after rape or incest,<sup>1</sup> she found the abortion only intensified her pain.

“... [the doctor] asked three nurses to hold me down while he strapped me to the bed . . . I continued to scream that I didn’t want an abortion. He told me, “Shut up and quit that yelling!”

- I was told that an abortion would solve my problem,  
*when it was never really the problem in the first place.*
- I was told, ‘Your parents know what’s best,’  
*when they obviously were only concerned about their own reputations.*
- I was told, ‘You made the right decision,’  
*when I was never given a choice.*
- I was violated and betrayed by my father.  
*I was violated again by the abortionist.*

Why do even pro-lifers talk about exceptions for rape and incest?

Give this mother the opportunity to choose life for her child. ... Don’t let them be exploited again.

The mom needs love, support and understanding, not the pain of allowing herself to be violated again in order to kill her child.

Excerpted from *Victims and Victors: Speaking Out About Their Pregnancies, Abortions, and Children Resulting from Sexual Assault*, edited by David C. Reardon, Julie Makimaa and Amy Sobie (Acorn Books, 2000) p. 124-126.

1. *Victims and Victors* (Springfield, Acorn Books, 2000) 19-20.

### **“I was violated again by the abortionist.”**

Women victimized by sexual assault deserve our full support. They are asking Legislators for a chance to tell their side of the story. Studies show that most do not want abortion. Those who aborted report that it only increased their trauma. Those who didn't abort had no regrets.

#### **Better outcomes among women who don't abort.**

- 70% had their babies, and none regretted their decision.
- 78% of those who aborted had regrets and said that abortion was the wrong solution.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Women impacted by assault-related pregnancy petition for Congressional hearings.**

Studies indicate abortion makes a traumatic situation even worse. An Ad Hoc Committee of Women Pregnant by Sexual Assault has put together a Petition to Congress and State Legislators\* to request hearings on this issue ([www.afterabortion.org/vault](http://www.afterabortion.org/vault)).

#### **Assault victims coerced into and further traumatized by abortion.**

A survey of women who've had a sexual assault pregnancy revealed that many only aborted because they felt pressured, and that abortion only increased their grief and trauma.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Assault cases have higher risk of complications.**

The more difficult the circumstances prompting abortion, the more likely a woman will suffer severe post-abortion problems.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Sexual assault is a known risk factor for post-abortion problems.<sup>2</sup> Other risks of abortion include:**

- 31% suffer health complications
- Higher death rates from all causes
- 65% suffer symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Suicide rates are 6 times higher<sup>3</sup>

#### **“Victims and Victors”**

*Victims and Victors: Speaking Out About Their Pregnancies, Abortions, and Children Resulting From Sexual Assault* includes research and testimonies from women who had sexual assault pregnancies. Order from Acorn Books: 1-888-412-2676.

#### **“Forced Abortion in America”**

- Assault victims often report that someone else made the abortion decision for them. The pressure to abort can escalate to violence or even murder.<sup>4</sup>
- Teens have been taken to clinics for forced abortions and returned to their rapists.<sup>1</sup>
- 64% of women surveyed after abortion report feeling pressured into unwanted abortions.<sup>5</sup>
- For research, headlines and stories of coercion and abortion-related violence, download “Forced Abortion in America,” and other resources and fact sheets at [www.theunchoice.com/resources.htm](http://www.theunchoice.com/resources.htm).

1. *Victims and Victors* (Springfield, IL: Acorn Books, 2000) 19-22. 2. Reardon, “Abortion Decisions and the Duty to Screen,” *J. Contemporary Health Law and Policy* 20(1):109, Winter 2003. 3. See the “Research and Key Facts” booklet at [www.theunchoice.com/resources.htm](http://www.theunchoice.com/resources.htm). 4. See the special report “Forced Abortions in America,” at [www.theunchoice.com/resources](http://www.theunchoice.com/resources). 5. VM Rue et. al., “Induced abortion and traumatic stress: A preliminary comparison of American and Russian women,” *Medical Science Monitor* 10(10):SR5-16, 2004.

# Petition to Congress and State Legislators

## from the Ad Hoc Committee of Women Pregnant by Sexual Assault (WPSA)

**We, the undersigned, having each experienced a pregnancy resulting from rape or incest,** hereby petition the U.S. Congress and individual state legislatures to hold public hearings at which we and other women who have become pregnant from sexual assault will be invited to discuss our unique needs and concerns. The reasons for such hearings are set out below.

Every year, legislators, judges, and other policy makers discuss the problems of women who have become pregnant as a result of sexual assault. These discussions take place without *ever* first soliciting our input. In most cases, it is only in the context of highly divisive debates over abortion that we are discussed. In virtually every case, those people who claim to be defending our interests have never taken the time to actually listen to us to learn about our true circumstances, needs, and concerns.

We are deeply offended and dismayed each time our difficult circumstances are *exploited* for public consumption to promote the political agenda of others. This is a grave injustice. In pursuing their political agendas, these exploiters have reduced our concerns, needs, and circumstances to a crude caricature.

Those who claim to represent our interests have never sought our authorization to represent us. They do not know us, understand us, or truly care about us. Just as we were once used, without our consent, to gratify the sexual desires of others, so we continue to be used, without our consent, to gratify the political goals of others.

Only *we* who have actually experienced a sexual assault pregnancy truly understand the trauma, fears, concerns, and needs of our sisters who are, or will someday become, pregnant as a result of rape or incest.

Each year, thousands of women will face this experience. Unless society at large begins to *listen to us today*, these other women will, like us, face great difficulty in finding authentic understanding and help.

The issue of sexual assault pregnancies is both delicate and complicated. Even women who have been sexually assaulted but did not become pregnant can only speak in terms of their own fears rather than their actual experience. Only women who were

or are pregnant by sexual assault can knowledgeably testify about this experience.

Our experiences are varied. Many of us carried our pregnancies to term. Some of us raised or are raising our children, while others placed our children in adoptive homes. Others of us had abortions. In many cases, we felt pressured to abort by family members, social workers, and doctors who insisted that abortion was the “best” solution. For many the abortion caused physical and emotional trauma equal to or exceeding the trauma of the sexual assault that our abortions were supposed to “cure.”

We are the only ones who can bear witness to our real experiences and our real needs. Please listen to our unique perspective!

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### Signatories:

- |                            |                            |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Arlene Anzalone (MI)    | 17. Patricia Storms (CA)   |
| 2. Eleanor Attonito (NJ)   | 18. Rebecca Underwood (MD) |
| 3. Diana Conley (OH)       | 19. Kay Zibolsky (WI)      |
| 4. Sue B. Evans (LA)       | 20. Dana (CA)              |
| 5. Heather Gemmen (CO)     | 21. Diane (RI)             |
| 6. Virginia Greene (AL)    | 22. Gloriann (CA)          |
| 7. Shea Hart (SC)          | 23. Helene (IL)            |
| 8. Jeanette Himko (PA)     | 24. Janet (AZ)             |
| 9. Sarah Hoover (HI)       | 25. Lisa (CA)              |
| 10. Mary V. Hopkins (MI)   | 26. Marie (CA)             |
| 11. Dorcas O. King (WY)    | 27. Maura (WA)             |
| 12. Suzanne L. Maurer (HI) | 28. Ruby (BC)              |
| 13. Laurie McDevitt (IL)   | 29. Shirley (CO)           |
| 14. Susan Renne (TX)       | 30. Jane Doe # 1 (OH)      |
| 15. Louise Simmons (VA)    | 31. Jane Doe #2 (KS)       |
| 16. Cynthia Speltz (MN)    | 32. Jane Doe #3 (OH)       |

There are three levels of signatories to this document: **public** (willing to publicly testify or be interviewed using their true identities, and identified with their full names); **semi-private** (willing to testify or be interviewed under various terms, possibly with a requirement for anonymity, and identified by first name only); and **anonymous** (identified as a “Jane Doe”) due to personal or familial concerns that require privacy).

The actual signatures are on file. Contact, upon authorized agreement, may be initiated through the Elliot Institute, (217) 525-8202.

For more information about WPSA or signing the petition, call 1-888-412-2676.