

Abortion debate and the risk of pregnancy

The Open Forum Letters to the Editor **The Denver Post** Sunday, October 4, 2020

Re: *“The abortion question on your November ballot,” Sept 27 letter to the editor*

The letter by Thomas Perille, M.D. (Sept. 27) supporting Proposition 115 banning abortions in Colorado after 22 weeks states that abortions later in pregnancy present a “substantial risk to the health and life of women.”

The main risk for women who are pregnant is the pregnancy itself. Pregnancy is not a benign condition, and women die from being pregnant. This a medical fact. The risk of death for women in pregnancy (the maternal mortality ratio), has been going up for women in the US as more women are having desired pregnancies later in life. But this makes them more vulnerable to life-threatening complications of pregnancy as well as higher risks of catastrophic fetal abnormalities. These problems often are not known until after 22 weeks.

Over 40 years ago, I began developing safe methods of abortion later in pregnancy because my patients needed them. In numerous papers I have published in medical journals, which can be found on my web site at www.drhern.com., major complication rates for thousands of my patients having abortions after the first trimester range from zero to 0.5%, whereas the major complication rate for term delivery is routinely 28% or more since almost one third of all births are conducted as cesarean deliveries.

The sponsors of 115 have announced that one purpose of the legislation is to “put the Boulder Abortion Clinic out of business.”

No woman’s life should be at the mercy of the next election. Prop. 115 should be defeated by the voters of Colorado.

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Editor’s note: Hern is director of Boulder Abortion Clinic