

Further, I write to you today as a mother-by-choice to four adult children, two of whom—my stepdaughter and nephew—other mothers gave birth to. When I was raising my daughter alone for her first six years, we survived because my family set down roots in St. Joseph. I have white skin, I had an excellent public school education, I had parents who knew the right people so I always had access to jobs and opportunity. Still, I was suicidal as a young single mom.

Because of who I was and where I was born, I was fortunate to be able to access abortion care when I needed it. Before I had my daughter, I had an abortion in 1985 at the Planned Parenthood Clinic in Kalamazoo. The following year, that clinic was firebombed by anti-abortion terrorists, which did exactly what it was meant to do, it silenced me for 30 years.

The neighborhoods I played in as a child, my British grandparents who loved me, and the church I sang solos in my whole young life, didn't teach me that my existence *is* political and that it would be politicized my whole life. But I, and so many voters like me, understand that viscerally now and you can't take that knowing away from us.

So let me tell you what else I know now that I didn't for those thirty years I was silenced: *being someone who had an abortion does not erase everything I am as a parent*, and as a caregiver and everything I do to lift up my community. I am also someone who ran for state senate last year, against now Senate Minority Leader, Aric Nesbitt.

And so, I am not writing today to grovel before you. I am not writing to beg the minority to see and appreciate my humanity and the humanity of the more than 2 million of my fellow Michiganders who can become pregnant. I am writing to affirm our existence, including the 59% of those of us seeking abortion care who are already parents. I am writing to affirm the existence of the parents during Covid who juggled working from home and essentially homeschooling, often multiple children in multiple grades, often as single parents, because an illegitimate President failed to act. He played with people's lives to scapegoat Democratic governors like ours, and he and a DeVos-backed MIGOP have exploited and weaponized parents' fears, overwhelm and stress for political gain, sponsoring groups like Moms for Liberty and We The Parents to sow chaos in our communities. Which, overwhelmingly, the voters in Michigan saw through, by the way.

I am writing today to state plainly that our decisions about whether or not and when to stay pregnant, our decisions about whether or not and when to parent, about whether to accept life sentences of coparenting with our abusers, or when and whether to joyfully accept the complicated life of a being parents are not up to you.

Despite efforts to suppress votes by spreading lies and disinformation about the Reproductive Freedom For All ballot proposal, the voters have spoken loudly in support of it. We passed Proposition 3 and we elected a Democratic Trifecta for the first time in more than four decades. I am writing to state plainly that if you fail to act on or fail to pass this legislation that erases all traces of the 1931 abortion ban from Michigan's laws, we will erase you from your jobs.

And while I have your attention, Michigan needs it be a paid leave state so that more Michigan families can grow under the best of circumstances instead of the worst, most painful ones. We have this one opportunity to rebuild the Michigan we love so that it loves us back and so it gives us and our families the space to do so much more than survive; to actually THRIVE, to want to live and work and raise families in Michigan, and to live and love one another fully, with abandon and with joy.

Respectfully,

Kim Jorgensen Gane