

Tamara B  
Tennessee  
Sen. Jim Tracy

In 2008, our second daughter, Jenna Grace, was diagnosed in utero with Trisomy 18. She also had various birth defects, which included her malformations of the heart and kidneys, a cystic hygroma, and a clubbed foot.

My husband and I made the decision to terminate, and at first, our doctor supported this option. She believed we would be able to do so at a hospital in Nashville, as I was too far along to go to a clinic. We soon found out we would not be able to do so, and our only option would be to travel to Atlanta, four hours away from us. The reason for this was because none of the hospitals in our area would perform the procedure due to the political climate in our state.

We decided to travel to Atlanta, although it was not what I wanted, as I would not be able to see my daughter, hold her, or take pictures with her. I would also not be able to have her remains. As much as I wanted those things, I did not want her to suffer, so Atlanta was truly our only option.

We made the appointment, and they assured me I was qualified for a one day procedure. They also said they had a special program for women who were terminating for medical reasons, and I would be separated from those who were doing so electively. However, when we arrived, we were not separated, and we waited for four hours in the waiting room before being told they had made a mistake. I was not qualified for the one day procedure and would have to travel back to Atlanta the next week if I wanted the procedure done.

My husband and I decided we could not emotionally handle another trip and decided to carry to term.

I am still disgusted and angry that the political opinion of people in my state had more control over my life and the life of my child than I did. Since I've started sharing my story, I have heard from several different women who have had close to the same experience I had, being denied an abortion for a poor prenatal diagnosis because of the political climate. I will continue to share my story so those women won't feel so alone and to stop laws that will place other women in the position I was in.