

Brandi Swindell's Oral Testimony

Dear Chair Murray, Senator Burr, and Members of this Committee,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share today.

My name is Brandi Swindell, and I am a fourth-generation Idahoan, human rights activist, and CEO and Founder of Stanton Healthcare and Stanton Public Policy Center.

Stanton Healthcare is a women's healthcare provider which specializes in serving women with unexpected pregnancies by providing professional medical care, practical and emotional support, women's wellness care, and an outreach to refugee and marginalized communities. We are based in Idaho, with affiliates in the U.S. and internationally.

Stanton is part of a women's movement which has over 3,000 pregnancy resource centers and life-affirming medical clinics across the nation that outnumber abortion clinics by four to one. Women who walk through our doors are treated with dignity and equality regardless of their race, political views, religion, or economic situation.

After the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* on June 24, so many have asked the pro-life community, "Are you ready to support women in a post-*Roe* America?" I can say with certainty, thousands of pregnancy resource centers and life-affirming women's medical clinics have been waiting and preparing for this moment for decades.

We are ready to meet the challenge and we are going to make sure that every woman facing an unexpected pregnancy in a post-*Roe* America will have access to life-affirming quality care, compassionate resources, and tangible support.

Yesterday in my home state of Idaho, Stanton Healthcare organized and led a symposium called, "Supporting Women in an Abortion-Free Idaho." Political, faith, and community leaders, and organizations came together in a non-partisan way to find creative and life-affirming solutions as we unite to support women with unexpected pregnancies. We are excited that other states are following Idaho's lead.

In a post-*Roe* America, shouldn't our nation's goal, and the goal of this committee, be to put aside divisions, anger, and partisanship... and commit ourselves to serving and helping women?

As political leaders and members of this committee, you can support women with unexpected pregnancies by passing legislation that will provide better prenatal and medical care for the marginalized and women from communities of color. Paid maternity leave and child care are steps in the right direction.

Since May 2, there have been over 60 attacks on centers like Stanton Healthcare. These attacks are unconscionable and ultimately threaten the women who attempt to walk through our doors seeking access to our services. Because of this, Stanton has had to hire a private security firm which has cost our organization over \$6,000 to date.

For those who disagree with the Supreme Court's decision on *Roe*, directing revenge and retaliation on centers like Stanton Healthcare is misguided, hateful, anti-women, and must be condemned and stopped immediately.

Today, I'm calling on all members of this committee to personally and publicly condemn the fire-bombing, violent attacks, and threats against life-affirming charitable women's clinics. Congress and the Biden Administration should be part of the solution and not cast blame on our centers.

It is also deeply troubling for the press, politicians, and media outlets to refer to centers like Stanton as “fake clinics.” First, we are attacked with physical violence. Next, we are attacked with the violence of lies, disinformation, slander, and falsehoods.

To diminish Stanton Healthcare in this way insults our medical directors who are highly regarded MD’s, our physician assistants, nurses, sonographers and others on our medical team who have worked so hard to achieve and maintain their professional credentials.

But most of all, it insults the thousands of women and their children who have been helped by our clinics. They did not receive “fake” medical care, or “fake” baby formula during the nationwide shortage, or “fake” baby supplies, “fake” financial support, or “fake” counseling and so much more when they walked through our doors. We should not be attacking clinics like Stanton or proposing anti-woman legislation. Rather, we should all be standing with these women who seek our services.

The overturning of *Roe* on June 24 sent shockwaves through our nation that will take us months and perhaps even years to process. However, if we are truly committed to justice and women’s rights, we can come together as a nation and find creative solutions to empower and stand with women in a post-*Roe* America.

Once again, thank you for the invitation to share about the critical work of Stanton Healthcare and the amazing women we serve.

Ms. Swindell’s Bio:

Brandi Swindell is a nationally known speaker, advocate for human rights, and the Founder and CEO of Stanton Healthcare and Stanton Public Policy Center. Stanton Healthcare is committed to providing women with unexpected pregnancies professional medical care, women’s wellness care, tangible support, hope and compassion. Stanton has clinics in America and internationally. Stanton Public Policy Center is a women’s advocacy and educational group that works on issues of human rights and justice which empower and inspire women.

Some of Ms. Swindell’s work includes fighting to end Uyghur forced abortion, systematic rape, and genocide, working for freedom of speech and religion, and organizing the only public memorial in Tiananmen Square for the students who were killed there during the 1989 massacre.

Ms. Swindell has been featured in both the national and international press and media.

One page summation of Ms. Swindell's Testimony:

Ms. Swindell will describe the work of Stanton Healthcare which operates life-affirming women’s healthcare clinics providing a wide range of services to women with unexpected pregnancies including professional medical care and practical and emotional support. Stanton Healthcare also offers women’s wellness services and an outreach to refugee and marginalized communities.

Stanton is part of a women’s movement which has over 3,000 pregnancy resource centers across the nation - outnumbering abortion clinics by four to one.

In addition, Ms. Swindell will:

Discuss how the pro-life movement is ready to meet the challenge to ensure every woman facing an unexpected pregnancy in a post-*Roe* America will have access to life-affirming quality care, compassionate resources, and tangible support.

Address the violence and attacks against life-affirming clinics; calling on all members of this committee to personally and publicly condemn the fire-bombing, violent attacks, and threats against life-affirming women's clinics. Congress and the Biden Administration should be part of the solution and not cast blame on our centers.

Draw attention to the damaging effects of labeling life-affirming centers "fake clinics." Doing so insults the thousands of women and their children who have been helped by our clinics. The women served did not receive "fake" medical care, or "fake" baby formula during the nationwide shortage, or "fake" baby supplies, financial support, counseling and so much more. We should not be attacking clinics like Stanton or proposing anti-women legislation. Rather, we should all be standing with them.

Let's come together as a nation and find creative solutions to empower and stand with women in a post-Roe America.

About Stanton Healthcare

Stanton International is a life-affirming movement of women's healthcare clinics founded in 2006 and based in Idaho's Treasure Valley with affiliate locations in the US and internationally. Stanton exists to ensure women facing unexpected pregnancies have access to quality medical care and compassionate alternatives to abortion.

Stanton Healthcare never discriminates in providing services based on race, creed, color, national origin, age, marital or financial status of its clients. We provide our services to a diverse demographic that includes; the refugee community, those struggling with economic challenges, and the marginalized. All services are provided at no charge to women, children, and families.

Stanton Healthcare's flagship operates three licensed clinics in Idaho – in Boise, Meridian, and a mobile medical clinic. Every Stanton clinic adheres to the highest medical standards under the supervision of a board-certified OB/GYN and Physician Assistant.

Stanton provides a vast array of services to the community at no charge, including:

- Early-detection pregnancy testing
- Ultrasound/pregnancy verification
- Options counseling
- Abortion Pill Reversal (APR)
- Wellness care
- STD/STI testing and treatment
- After-abortion exams and support
- Advocacy appointments
- Maternity and baby supplies
- Lactation support
- Pre- and post-natal education
- Massage therapy
- Refugee assistance and support
- Breast cancer screening awareness and partnership with local mammography mobile clinics
- Fatherhood mentoring
- Mobile clinic outreach to underserved and rural communities
- Referrals for OB/GYN care, housing, legal assistance, and adoption

A few vital statistics about Stanton Healthcare's clients:

- In 2021, 73% of the women we served at Stanton Healthcare in Idaho were considering or seeking an abortion.
- 90% of these women reported feeling pressured to have an abortion by someone they trust.
- 170 Stanton Babies were born in the past year.
- 187 Stanton Babies are currently due to be born.
- More than 90% of women choose life at Stanton Healthcare after seeing their baby on ultrasound, talking with a trained advocate and medical professional, and receiving quality resources and support.

In a 2021 snapshot of just one of our Stanton Healthcare clinics (in Meridian, Idaho) Stanton provided over \$429,000 in life-affirming services at no charge to clients, including:

- \$174,000 in baby clothing and supplies, along with 18 months of wellness support through our StantonCare individualized program for moms and babies.
- 348 Lab-grade pregnancy tests valued at \$22,620
- 618 Ultrasound exams valued at \$194,670
- 283 Follow-up visits valued at \$31,395
- 36 STD tests and follow-up care valued at \$7,308

Abortion

Pill

Reversal

In response to the increased push of chemical abortions via the “abortion pill,” Stanton Healthcare offers Abortion Pill Reversal to moms who feel the sting of regret after taking the first abortion pill. So far, Stanton has had three babies born after successful reversals. Stanton provides this life-saving medical care because no woman should ever feel forced to complete an abortion when she has a change of heart.

Contrary to claims Abortion Pill Reversal is unsafe or medically unsound, the only valid criticism that should be offered of Abortion Pill Reversal is that it is a relatively new technique yet to be exhaustively validated. Credible studies have shown that the oral treatment with progesterone (which is what Stanton administers) has a successful reversal rate of 68%. The conclusion of one such study: “The reversal of the effects of mifepristone using progesterone is safe and effective.”^[1] This is consistent with Stanton’s own experience, as babies have made it to full term in good health using this method.

[1] Delgado G, Condly SJ, Davenport M, Tinnakornsriruphap T, Mack J, Khau V, Zhou PS. *A case series detailing the successful reversal of the effects of mifepristone using progesterone*. Issues Law Med. 2018 Spring;33(1):21-31. PMID: 30831017. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30831017> (retrieved July 7, 2022)

Funding and Resources

In sharp contrast to abortion businesses such as Planned Parenthood which receive hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars every year, Stanton Healthcare exists solely through the generous financial support of individuals, churches, and community organizations. In addition to our highly-qualified medical and client care team, Stanton’s personnel includes trained volunteers who in 2021 contributed 13,202 hours - totaling \$369,656 in donated time

Community

Impact

For over 15 years, Stanton Healthcare has been a powerful force for good in Idaho's Treasure Valley. Stanton's clinics have provided quality care at no charge to women seeking physical, emotional and practical support during an unexpected pregnancy, resulting in stronger families and stronger communities. Stanton clients consistently rate their experience with glowing reviews, regularly referring friends and family for services. Because of Stanton's incredible impact, support has come from all corners of the state and the nation - lawmakers, community leaders, clergy, political figures, and other prominent leaders have expressed their unwavering public endorsement of Stanton Healthcare. With confidence in our mission, Stanton Healthcare will continue to provide hope and help to women and their families across the U.S. and internationally.

Stanton Healthcare Client Testimonials:

Jacey

I was in a very bad place in my life when I decided to get an abortion.

My mom told me she wouldn't have anything to do with my baby. My boyfriend was a drug addict and causing abuse in my life and left me, and I was diagnosed with having severe panic attacks and hyperemesis at just 5 weeks into my pregnancy. I was so sick I would throw up 20-30 times a day and had to get IV fluids. I thought there was no way I could do this. I was so sick I felt like I could die. I already had one daughter and didn't think anyone would love me with two. I thought my only option to have a future was to abort my baby.

I drove to Planned Parenthood and saw Stanton Healthcare across the parking lot. I had heard about them and thought to myself, "I'm going to go in there and if they can help me and can change my mind about getting an abortion, then so be it. And if not, I'm going across the parking lot to Planned Parenthood to get an abortion."

I went to Stanton Healthcare and found that they are a real clinic that helped me with everything I needed. They loved me and showed me I wasn't alone, gave me things I needed for my baby, counseling to get out of my life-threatening abusive relationship, encouraged me I could make it through having hyperemesis, encouraged me that I could have a life with this baby, encouraged me to find a church I was loved after having been hurt elsewhere, and gave me ultrasounds to see my baby. Seeing my daughter's heartbeat made me stop feeling the panic attacks that made me want to abort and stop feeling the horrible nausea and see my baby was a real person that I couldn't kill. It instantly made me feel attached to my baby and love her.

Not only did Stanton help me decide not to abort, but they helped me turn my life back to God. When I lost my job after my baby was born, I was able to pray because the people at Stanton loved me in a way that turned my heart back to God. I felt led to start my own business and for the first time in my life, I can provide for my children on my own and have more than enough. They impacted my whole future and my children's future.

I look at my baby and feel ashamed that I ever was going to abort her. I'm so glad she is in this world now and in my life forever because I was able to choose to keep her with Stanton's help. I thank God that Stanton helped me get out of fear and choose life.

Now everyone loves my daughter. My mother is in her life and happy I had her. It impacted her, as well. My daughter has a sister and I found a man that loves all of us. All my fears were lies and had I aborted my little girl, I know it would have caused me to carry shame and depression.

Thank you, Stanton, from me and my baby! She has a future to live because of you!

Audrey

Throughout my pregnancy and postpartum experience, Stanton Healthcare has made it a priority to provide me and my family with quality care. From the moment we walked in, we felt taken care of by everyone.

Stanton did an ultrasound of my now three-month-old daughter and brought me so much peace during a stressful season. They provided me with all the resources I needed to get signed up with Medicaid, they recommended my OB (who I now recommend to other expecting mothers), and they provided me with lots of information about pregnancy because it was my first. Stanton made my pregnancy experience so smooth. I was in need of a lot of help and I am so happy that I decided to go to Stanton first.

During my postpartum period, Stanton has provided me with countless resources, including diapers, classes, and clothes. I feel incredibly supported and feel I have even developed a friendship with some of the women at Stanton. I know they are an essential resource in our community and hope to give back in any way I can.

Jennifer (Abortion Pill Reversal)

Finding out I was pregnant was a big surprise. I'm married, almost 40, and we had six other children.

While I've always felt like people shouldn't get abortions, my husband was adamant in telling me we shouldn't have more babies.

When we went to Planned Parenthood, they showed me a video about the abortion pill. Over and over, the video says after taking the pill, women feel a huge sense of relief. But before even taking the pill, I was extremely upset. In fact, I was sobbing uncontrollably.

I've thought back on that so many times. Can you imagine a medical professional sitting in front of you while you are sobbing and not saying something like, "Ma'am, I don't think now is the time for you to take this pill. You seem like you have not decided this is the best thing for you."

But no one said that. No one even asked if I was okay.

After my husband filled out paperwork, I was instructed to take the first pill in front of the doctor. When he handed me the pill, I had a feeling of intimidation and vulnerability, but I took it.

I kept thinking, "I'm going to feel relief soon." Their video had assured me I would, but I didn't feel anything close to relief. So then I felt crazy and out of my head. Having an abortion was not something I wanted. I was forcing myself and believing the lie that I was going to feel relief.

Planned Parenthood left me with the impression that they are a business, and their product is abortion, and it is just a money game. It wasn't to support me or help me make the best decision, or make sure that I was okay after I left, or anything like that.

Before we left, we had paid over \$1,000 for the ultrasound and the pills.

That night, I couldn't sleep, so around 2 a.m. I googled: "If I don't take the second set of pills, will the baby be okay? Did I cause damage or defects?"

That's when a phone number came up about Abortion Pill Reversal, which I'd never heard of, so I started texting it. And someone responded right away.

Within a couple of hours, I knew I was going to be connected with a place that would try to help my baby and me. That same morning I walked into Stanton Healthcare and met the incredible people there. They did an ultrasound and my baby still had a heartbeat! They started me on a protocol to help protect my baby from the effects of the abortion pill, and they continued to provide me with caring support through the whole pregnancy, and beyond.

My son is now 5 months old - completely healthy - and we could never imagine our lives without him! I'm super grateful for Stanton meeting me early in the morning on a Saturday to save my son. And I'm so grateful to everyone who supports Stanton so women like me can know this option exists and have access to it. It gave me the opportunity to change my mind. I would have missed out on life with my son and I would have regretted that decision forever.

Stanton Healthcare's legal counsel, Michelle Adams, responds to claims of Stanton being a "fake clinic."

The interpretation of the word "fake" is not a matter of opinion. It means "not true, real, or genuine."

However, Stanton Healthcare is recognized by the State of Idaho as a fully licensed medical clinic, operating under all state laws and the licensing of its Medical Director, with all proper CLIA waivers, maintaining documentation of proper licensing from all its medical staff and volunteers, with a medical advisory team, and continuing education in best practices. Stanton is listed by the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare as a recognized provider in this field. Ultimately, Stanton meets or exceeds the licensing requirements of healthcare clinics in Idaho and has certification and standards of excellence beyond that of abortion providers in the state.

It is irrational to suggest that because abortion clinics and pregnancy medical clinics serve a similar population – pregnant women – they must, therefore, offer the same set of services. It is presumptuous to declare which services ought to be offered at every establishment serving pregnant women. Stanton Healthcare offers many services that abortion clinics do not, but it would be illogical to therefore conclude that the abortion clinics are "fake clinics."

The reality is that Stanton, and many of those of its type, fill a critical niche in our nation that would not be served otherwise. Many served by Stanton are low-income and vulnerable women who would not receive sufficient practical or emotional assistance elsewhere. When politicians and media outlets cast disparaging suspicion on our clinics, you are steering women away from some of the places where they might receive such support.