

Testimony of Fe Vinoya
July 8, 2016

My name is Fe Esperanza Racpan Vinoya, a nurse of 26 years and I represent the 12 nurses who were ordered to assist in abortion 6 years ago in a Same Day Surgery Unit in New Jersey. I became a nurse to help people, not to do harm. Participating in the destruction of human life is not only a violation of my religious convictions, it conflicts with my calling as a medical professional to protect life, not to end it.

Despite our numerous pleas to our superiors due to our religious beliefs, we were required to be trained to participate in the preparation, delivery, and disposal of the baby. Our jobs were threatened if we were not to follow their directives.

Protecting our conscience serves our patients well. I will not participate in abortion. Period. So no amount of compulsion against me would have succeeded. But forcing me and my colleagues out of our jobs would have denied all of my patients access to the services we perform on a daily basis. And no one should want medical professionals, with the power of life and death in their hands, that are forced to set aside their moral convictions.

Both New Jersey and federal law prohibited discrimination against us because of our refusal to perform abortions. But in practice those laws are often only as effective as the willingness of government to respect them. In response to our lawsuit to defend our rights the hospital argued that those laws gave us no right to sue and enforce those laws. That I and my colleagues had to go through this ordeal shows the need for clearer protections that do not rely upon the good faith of government officials.

I am here in your presence right now as the voice for the health professionals who are and will be undergoing the same traumatic experience of being ordered to participate in the killing of the innocent babies. I was asked to choose between following my conscience or keeping my job to sustain my family. We were blessed to have the assistance of ADF and attorney Demetrios Stratis to protect our rights. Others will not be so fortunate, and should not have to rely simply upon the hope that whichever Administration is in power will enforce the law. .

I encourage you to protect medical professionals like us and allow us to serve our patients without fear of discrimination. Please pass the Conscience Protection Act.