



2020 was a stressful but also memorable year for me. I was working home at a breakneck pace – my company was one of many working on a therapeutic to treat those suffering from the Covid-19 pandemic. In July of 2020, I had a gynecology follow up appointment that had been delayed a couple of times while we were in lockdown.

I had a diagnostic procedure, and the outcome was frightening: it turned out I had a rare type of cervical cancer. It would be possible to treat the cancer for the short term with a fertility-preserving surgery, but because this cancer returns in about 20% of patients, the complete eventual treatment for this type of cancer was hysterectomy.

I was single, in the middle of a pandemic, and just told that I had an extremely limited time to have biological children.

Having kids has been important for me for a long time. So important, in fact, that I co-founded a cooperative living project to support raising kids in community. I have since moved on from that project, but the lessons I learned from building it and from living in that community stay with me. One of those lessons is that families can be constructed in a myriad of different ways. Regardless of family construction, parents and their children need and deserve parentage laws that protect them.

After discussions with my medical team which included an oncologist and a fertility specialist, I made the decision to pursue the fertility-sparing surgery,

and to try to get pregnant with the help of assisted reproductive technology and a sperm donor. If I am lucky and all goes well, I will be able to have a child before needing that hysterectomy. I will be a proud single parent by choice.

My donor is a friend of mine, and we are both very clear on our desire for me to have sole legal and physical custody of this child. He is happy to be my donor but does not want to be a parent, and I am not seeking a co-parent. We did our research and obtained legal support to execute a sperm donor agreement to formalize our plan and protect our interests, and those of the child.

In that process, I learned that a law protecting my sole legal and physical custody as the single parent of a donor conceived child does not exist in Massachusetts. The donor agreement provides some basic protection as a contract between parties, but that protection is limited.

I will have to go through an expensive, time-consuming single-parent adoption to ensure the protection my future child and my family needs. I believe that me and my future child, and all families like ours, deserve the same protection under the law of Massachusetts as children of married, two-parent families. It is vitally important that Massachusetts has laws that protect all families and that clarify the line between donor and parent. As such, I respectfully submit my testimony today in support of the Massachusetts Parentage Act.

Massachusetts Parentage Act S 1133 / H 1714

The Massachusetts Parentage Act (MPA) will update Massachusetts' outdated parentage law so that it is clear, equitable, and provides legal protection for all families, including LGBTQ+ families.