

I want to share with you an awesome experience I recently had in the Colorado House of Representatives. It is a humbling experience to look back and realize that God used me to play a role in His divine orchestration.

As I was leaving the House chambers for the weekend when our Democrat Speaker of the House mentioned that the coming Monday would be the final day of this year's General Assembly. He went on to state that there were still numerous resolutions on the calendar which we would need to be addressed prior to the summer adjournment. Interestingly, he specifically mentioned that one of the resolutions we would be hearing was being carried by the House Majority Leader Alice Madden, honoring the 90th anniversary of Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains.

As a strong pro-life legislator I was disgusted by the idea that we would pass a resolution honoring this 90 year legacy of genocide. I drove home that night wondering what I could say that might pierce the darkness during the debate on this heinous resolution.

On Saturday morning I took my eight-year-old son up to the mountains to go white water rafting. The trip lasted all day. As we were driving home, exhausted and hungry, I remembered that I had accepted an invitation to attend a fundraising dinner that night for a local pro-life organization. One of my most respected mentors had personally called me several weeks earlier and asked me to attend, so I knew I'd have to clean up and head over.

After our meal, the executive director of the organization introduced the keynote speaker. I looked up and saw walking to the stage a handicapped young lady being assisted to the microphone by a young man holding a guitar.

Her name was Gianna Jessen.

Gianna said "Hello," welcomed everyone, and then sang three of the most beautiful Christian songs that I have ever heard.

She then began to give her testimony. When her biological mother was 17 years old and 7 ½ months pregnant she went to a Planned Parenthood clinic to have an abortion. As God would have it, the abortion failed and a beautiful two-pound baby girl was brought into the world. Unfortunately, she was born with cerebral palsy and the doctors thought that she would never survive. The doctors were wrong.

Imagine the timing! A survivor of a Planned Parenthood abortion arrived in town just days before the Colorado House of Representatives was to celebrate Planned Parenthood's "wonderful" work.

As I listened to Gianna's amazing testimony the Lord inspired me to ask her if she could stay in Denver until Monday morning so that I could introduce her on the floor of the House and tell her story. Perhaps she could even begin the final day's session by singing our country's national anthem!

To my surprise she said she would seriously consider it. If she were to agree, she wanted her accompanying guitar player to stay as well. A lady standing in line behind me waiting to meet Gianna overheard our conversation and said that she would be willing to pay for the guitarist's room. Gianna then said that she would think about it.

As I was driving home from the banquet my cell phone rang. It was Gianna and she immediately said, "I'm in, let's ruin this celebration." Praise God!

When Monday morning came, I awoke at 6:00 to write my speech before heading to the Capitol. As I wrote down the words I could sense God's help and I knew that this was going to be a powerful moment for the pro-life movement.

Following a committee hearing, I rushed into the House Chambers just as the opening morning prayer was about to be given. Between the prayer and the pledge of allegiance I wrote a quick note to the Speaker of the House explaining that Gianna is an advocate for cerebral palsy. I took the note to the Speaker and asked if I could have my friend open the last day of session by singing the national anthem. Without any hesitation the Speaker took the microphone and said, "Before we begin, Representative Harvey has made available for us Gianna Jessen to sing the National Anthem."

Gianna sang the most amazing rendition of the Star Spangled Banner that you could possibly imagine. Every person in the entire chamber was completely still, quiet, and in awe of this frail young lady's voice.

Due to her cerebral palsy, Gianna often loses her balance, and shortly after starting to sing she grabbed my arm to stabilize herself, and I could tell that she was shaking. Suddenly, midway through the song, she forgot the words and began to hum and said, "Please forgive me I am so nervous." She then immediately began singing again and every House member and every guest throughout the chambers began to sing along with her to give her encouragement and lift her up.

As I looked around the huge hall I listened to the unbelievable melody of Gianna's voice being accompanied by a choir of over 100 voices. I had chills running all over my body and I knew that I had just witnessed an act of God.

As the song concluded the Speaker of the House explained that Gianna has cerebral palsy and is an activist to bring awareness to the disease. "Let us give her a hand not only for her performance today but also for her advocacy work," he said. The chamber immediately exploded into applause. She had them all in the palm of her hand.

The Speaker then called the House to order and we proceeded as usual to allow members to make any announcements or introductions of guests. For dramatic effect, I waited until I was the last person remaining before I introduced Gianna.

As I waited for my turn, I nervously paced back and forth praying to God that he would give me the peace, confidence and the courage necessary to pull off what I knew would be one of the most dramatic and controversial moments of my political career.

While I waited, a prominent reporter from one of the major Denver newspapers walked over to Gianna and told her that her rendition captured the spirit of the national anthem more powerfully than any she had ever heard before.

Finally, I was the last person remaining, so I proceeded to the microphone and began my speech:

"Members, I would like to introduce you to a new friend and hero of mine-- her name is Gianna Jessen. She is visiting us today from Nashville, Tennessee where she is an accomplished recording artist.

She has cerebral palsy and was raised in foster homes before being adopted at the age of four.

She was born prematurely and weighed only two pounds at birth. She remained in the hospital for almost three months. A doctor once said she had a great will to live and that she fought for her life. Eventually she was able to leave the hospital and be placed in foster care.

Because of her cerebral palsy her foster mother was told that it was doubtful that she would ever crawl or walk. She could not sit up independently. Through the prayers and dedication of her foster mother, she eventually learned to sit up, crawl, then stand. Shortly before her fourth birthday she began to walk with leg braces and a walker.

She continued in physical therapy and after a total of four surgeries, she was able to walk without assistance.

She still falls sometimes, but she says she has learned how to fall gracefully after falling for 29 years.

Two years ago she walked into a local health club and said she wanted a private trainer. At the time her legs could not lift 30 pounds. Today she can leg press 200 pounds.

She became so physically fit that she began running marathons to raise money and awareness for cerebral palsy. She just returned last week from England where she ran in the London Marathon. It took her over 8 ½ hrs to complete. They were taking down the course by the time she made it to the finish line. But she made it none the less. With bloody feet and aching joints she finished the race.

Members would you help me recognize a modern day hero, Gianna Jessen?

At this point the chamber exploded into applause which lasted for 15 to 20 seconds. Gianna had touched their souls.

Ironically, Alice Madden the Majority Leader and sponsor of the Planned Parenthood Resolution walked over to Gianna and gave her a hug.

As the applause began to die down I raised my hand to be recognized one more time.

"Mr. Speaker, members, if you would allow me just a few more moments I would appreciate your time.

My name is Ted Harvey not Paul Harvey but please let me tell you the rest of the story.

The cause of Gianna's cerebral palsy is not because of some biological freak of nature, but rather the choice of her mother.

You see when her biological mother was 17 years old and 7 ½ months pregnant she went to a Planned Parenthood clinic to seek a late term abortion. The abortionist performed a saline abortion on this 17-year-old girl. This procedure requires the injection of a high concentration of saline into the mother's womb which the fetus is then bathed in and swallows which results in the fetus being burned to death, inside and out. Within 24 hrs the results are normally an induced still-born abortion.

As Gianna can testify the procedure is not always 100% effective. Gianna is an aborted late term fetus that was born alive. The high concentration of saline in the womb for 24 hrs resulted in a lack of oxygen to her brain and is the cause of her cerebral palsy.

Members, today we are going to recognize the 90th anniversary of Rocky Mountain Planned Parenthood,"

BANG! The gavel came down.

Just as I was finishing the last sentence of my speech, the climax of the morning, the Speaker of the House gavelled me down and said, "Representative Harvey, I will allow you to continue your introduction but not for the purposes of debating a measure now pending before the House."

At which point I said,

"Mr. Speaker I understand, I just wanted to put a face to what we are celebrating today".

Silence. Deafening silence.

I then walked back to my chair shaking like a leaf. The Democrats wouldn't look at me. They were fuming. It was beautiful. I have been in the legislature for five tough years and this made it all worthwhile.

The House Majority Leader wouldn't talk to me the rest of the day.

Was it because I introduced an abortion survivor, or was it because we touched her soul? She could hug an inspirational cerebral palsy victim and advocate, but was outraged when she discovered that the person she hugged was also an abortion survivor.

The headline in the Denver Post the next day read Abortion Jab Earns Rebuke. The Majority Leader is quoted as saying "I think it was amazingly rude to use a human being as an example of his personal politics,"

Yes Representative Madden, Gianna Jessen is a human being. She was when she was in her mother's womb and she was when she sang the National Anthem on the Floor of the Colorado House of Representatives.

The paper went on to quote Gianna Jessen, stating she was glad Harvey told her story. "We need to discuss the humanity of it. I'm glad to be able to speak up for children in the womb," she said. "If abortion is about women's rights, where were my rights?"

Leslie Hanks, one of the matriarchs of the pro-life movement in Colorado, was in the House Chamber that morning and told me that it was the single greatest moment she had witnessed in the State Legislature in the 20 years that she'd been lobbying in the Capitol.

All I can say is, "Glory to God!" He orchestrated it all, every minute of it, and I was so honored to have been chosen to play a part. May we all continue to be filled with and to fight for the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ!

In His service,

Ted Harvey
Assistant Minority Leader
Colorado House of Representatives