

Michelle Welden
395 Massillon Road
Akron, Ohio 44312
330-310-1070

Testimony in Support of HB294
House Community and Family Advancement Committee
October 13, 2015

Chairman Derickson, Vice Chair Ginter, Ranking Member House and committee members:

Thank you for letting me testify before you today. I am here in support of HB294. I am here to tell you of my personal experience with Planned Parenthood. It has been over thirteen years now that I was in a very different place in my life, and found myself to be unmarried, without resources, and pregnant. My friends mother worked for the local Jobs and Family Services and told me I could find help there. I made an appointment, but was told that before I could receive healthcare, I would require proof of pregnancy, and was sent to Planned Parenthood where I was told they gave free tests, and that was my only option since they accepted tests only from there or a Dr.

I went straight to the Planned Parenthood on Exchange St, Akron Ohio. When I arrived, everyone was very nice to me. The first woman who administered the test was extremely nice. As we were waiting for the results, she very nicely asked me many questions. Questions about the father and the relationship we were in. questions about my living and financial situation, questions about my family, and life. I was 20 and naïve, and eagerly and fully answered her questions as she was very nice

and seemed to just be having conversation.

She left the room, returning with paperwork in her hand. One of which, was the positive test result I needed for Jobs and Family Services to receive insurance for prenatal care. When she came in, she asked me if I was aware of my choices and began to tell me about abortion. In our earlier conversation, I had told her I was a pro-life Christian from an early age, and even in my circumstances, I already loved my baby and was excited, to which she originally seemed ok with. When we began to speak, telling her I would not have an abortion, her attitude changed. She began to use all the information I had freely given her against me. Asking how I could possibly bring a child into this world, knowing that I had not gone to college, had no career, a bad relationship and on and on.

I explained, as nicely as possible, that I understood that things would be hard, that I was sure I didn't even know how hard yet. But that from the moment I had a positive at home pregnancy test, I was instantly and fully in love with the little child growing and developing inside of me. Her attitude continued to sharply turn more and more negative. It was honestly hard for me to continue in this, as being only 20, it was very upsetting to have someone who had been so nice, suddenly seem so upset with me. Not only that, but she used more and more against me. Making me feel guilty to bring a child into my situation. Asking me if I realized what having a child would do to my life, my social life, and even my body. I began to feel many emotions, fear, worry, regret, and I admit that for a fleeting moment contemplated giving in. Though that thought went as quickly as it came, I even contemplated just telling her that maybe I would, just hoping she would go back to being nice and not seeming as though she did not like me.

She began to be more and more pushy, asking me how I could possibly think someone like me and in my situation could possibly properly raise a child, that it was unfair . Asking if I realized what it

would do to my life, that I could have a relationship later in life and have kids then. She made sure to tell me that a baby would change my body, making finding a husband harder, that it wasn't only unfair to me and would ruin my life to bring a child into this world, but that it was unfair to the child.

At this point, after using many different reasons and tactics, I finally asked politely for my test results. Even though, before this, I had tried by gesturing my hands towards them, hoping this would stop. However, when I did, she asked a few more questions, held tightly to the paper, and left the room. She returned some time later with a Planned Parenthood Counselor or Administrator.

She entered the room with very much the same demeanor of the first woman. Very, very nice. Someone who you wanted to like you, and, maybe a little more smoothly, we went through very much the same conversation as the first woman. And as the first, She became angry with me. I feel I must point out that I really wanted these women to like me. At 20 years old, it was very hard to have people who started out so welcoming and nice, suddenly turn on you. I finally was able to get my confirmation of pregnancy paper, and allowed to go with it. As I left, I clearly knew that everyone knew my situation, as even the nice and cordial workers changed their behavior towards me. I could not get out of that building fast enough.

Today, my Beautiful Rachel is about to turn 13 the end of November. She is a priviledge and a joy. It wasn't always easy, and I made mistakes, but without Rachel in my life I cannot imagine where I would be. When she was 2, I went to work for a man that I eventually married and we have a son Benjamin, together. He has adopted Rachel, and I cannot imagine a world without my two precious children. No, things were not always easy, and I was not perfect, nor am I now, but my children are so very happy. I can go nowhere, where I don't get compliments on their kindness and people always marval at their obedience and Rachel's helpfulness and sweetness to whomever she meets. They both

make the world a better place, and had I not had Rachel, I would have never gone down the road that led me to change my circumstances and meet my husband. She also brought much healing to my immediate family.

I often think back on my experience at Planned Parenthood, and it breaks my heart to think of the many young women who go through the same thing. Women who are often scared and alone. I hoped that this wasn't something that was uniform, but through research, especially through the writings and interviews of Abby Johnson, a former Planned Parenthood Administrator who has become pro-life, I've found they aren't. She speaks how their job was to turn every pregnant woman who came in, into an abortion (a profit stream), even given quotas. Having woman who clearly have no income or insurance and they go to Job and Family Services for help and are sent to Planned Parenthood for confirmation is another way for them to meet their quotas.

Thank you so much for letting me tell my story and listening to me. We are all guaranteed, by The Declaration of Independence, Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness. Though I do not agree with the decision of Roe v Wade, I realize that is not a part of this bill, nor can I change that it is law. I do feel that I had chosen life for my child, and by such an organization as Planned Parenthood whom claim to support choice, they very much wanted to take that choice away from me and any other they could convince to terminate their children.

Again, thank you so much for your time, and allowing me to speak.

Michelle Weiden 395 Massillon Rd. Akron Ohio, 44312 330-310-1070

