

Amy Gill
Toledo, Ohio

Testimony to the State of Ohio House Committee on Community and Family Advancement
November 4, 2015

Chairman Derickson, Vice Chair Ginter, Ranking member Howse, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today on House Bill 294.

Hello, my name is Amy Gill from Toledo, Ohio and I'm proud to stand with Planned Parenthood and strongly oppose House Bill 294.

I was raised by loving, educated parents but as I was becoming sexually active, I felt uncomfortable turning to them about obtaining birth control. It was a different time and I wanted to take care of this myself. A friend and I went to Planned Parenthood where I received an exam and birth control counseling by a nurse, followed by a prescription for effective contraception that was right for me.

I wanted a big family, but I also wanted to be a teacher. Between my husband and me, we have nine children. I had three children later in life, when my husband and I were ready for a family. We adopted 6 more after they had been in foster care. Planned Parenthood was there for me for the entire process of family planning.

I also achieved my dream of becoming a teacher and am now retired from teaching Kindergarten. Planned Parenthood helped me to take responsibility for my choices while continuing to achieve my goals, rather than having my future plans derailed by an unplanned pregnancy.

When my own daughter was confronted with birth-control needs, she turned to Planned Parenthood. My daughter was unemployed for a long time and went to Planned Parenthood for affordable birth control and to get breast exams and pap smears so she would remain cancer-free.

She had friends become teenage moms because they didn't have access to birth control or education. And now she recommends it to her friends who need advice about sexual health and family planning but could not get guidance and support from their parents.

I am thankful that Planned Parenthood was there for me, and is also there for my daughter. Planned Parenthood does so much more than provide safe, legal abortions to those who need or want them.

In fact, Planned Parenthood provides 2.7 million women, men and young people across the country with essential, preventive reproductive health care, like birth control. One in five women has been to Planned Parenthood for care during her lifetime, and I'm proud to be one of them.

Planned Parenthood is so needed here in Ohio. In our state, Planned Parenthood provides health care to nearly 80,000 patients annually – in most cases in rural or underserved areas, where without Planned Parenthood, these patients would have no where to turn for their health care.

Politicians who attack this necessary health care provider don't realize that with their harsh wants to remove funding, they would be leaving tens of thousands of patients across Ohio devastated by stripping

them of the basic reproductive health care they rely on. And a majority of Ohio voters – 60% - oppose defunding Planned Parenthood’s health services.

Politicians are being selfish by pushing forward their own ideals rather than thinking about the greater value of this health care provider in Ohio. Planned Parenthood has helped my daughter and I achieve our dreams. I wouldn’t be where I am today – with a wonderful family – without the help of Planned Parenthood, and that’s why I’m proud to share my story.