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

I was three months pregnant with my 6th child when I saw information about the Healthy Moms, Health Babies program with Planned Parenthood. I signed up for the program and they set up a meeting for me with Melissa LaManna. She is the project manager at Planned Parenthood for the Ohio Infant Mortality Reduction Initiative in Mahoning and Trumbull Counties. I work closely with Melissa and she visits me at my home.

I first came to Planned Parenthood for birth control when I was younger. Because of this good experience with Planned Parenthood several years ago, I knew I could trust them with my health and the health of my baby. I was so surprised and thankful that Planned Parenthood had this program to help me during my pregnancy and after the birth of my baby.

Melissa has been there for me every step of the way. Before the birth of my baby, she helped me with nutrition information to have a healthy pregnancy. She gave me a book to help me understand my body after giving birth. When my daughter was born premature and had to stay in the hospital for a while, Melissa would check on me and see how I was doing. I worried a lot because I had complications and my daughter was so small. I soon felt sad all the time and cried a lot. I always called her when I felt down. I didn't know why I felt that way. Melissa helped me realize that I had post-partum depression and gave me the resources to get in to treatment.

Because I had my older children years ago, I didn't have anything for a baby. Melissa helped me get a crib and a playpen. She's also helped me get diapers and milk when I was out of them and didn't have money to buy more. There was another time I needed some help. Someone gave me a bed for my kid and it had bed bugs. Pretty soon my house was infested. Melissa was there to listen and she found me resources to get new beds and get rid of the bed bugs.

After the birth of my daughter, I needed birth control. Planned Parenthood helped me get affordable birth control so that I won't get pregnant again.

Planned Parenthood has gone above and beyond in their care for me. In addition to the help with my pregnancy and obtaining birth control, they have helped me with my job search and career advice.

I don't know what I would do without Melissa LaManna and Planned Parenthood. Healthy Moms Healthy Babies is a good program. I wish I had this program for my other kids. More people need to know about it. I thought Planned Parenthood was only for birth control, but they do so many more good things for people.

The funding for this important program should not be eliminated. There are lots of young mothers who desperately need someone in their corner, someone that cares about them and their child. Sometimes you need someone who isn't a family member or judgmental.