



**Testimony on House Bill 294
Before the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee
The Hon. Senator Bill Coley, Chair
By Karen Rainey, AAUW/Ohio Public Policy Chair
January 27, 2016**

Chairman Coley, Vice Chair Seitz and members of the committee:

My name is Karen Rainey, and I am speaking for AAUW/Ohio, representing 1,500 members in 44 branches throughout Ohio. Since 1881, AAUW (formerly known as the American Association of University Women) has been one of the nation's leading voices promoting education and equity for women and girls. AAUW's 170,000 members nationwide have adopted a public policy program that makes increased access to quality, affordable health care and family planning services a priority.

AAUW supports Planned Parenthood as a provider of a wide range of services vital to women's health: including birth control, cervical cancer screenings and STD testing and treatment. Planned Parenthood health centers are vital service providers in their communities, ensuring that the family planning needs for those on federally-funded health programs are met. For many low-income women and women of color, Planned Parenthood is their main health care provider. Our leadership has expressed disappointment in yet another politically motivated attack on women's access to health services, jeopardizing care for the most vulnerable among us.

Here in Ohio, AAUW expresses the same disappointment that Ohio legislators would play politics with women's health. It is AAUW's position that family planning fosters self-sufficiency, promotes preventive health care, and educates people on ways to protect themselves and their families from the spread of sexually transmitted infections. We know that Planned Parenthood provides these services to women who would not be served if Planned Parenthood were not there for them.

House Bill 294 is expressly designed to take away an important, trusted source of comprehensive health care from the people who need it most. We do not want to see this happen. We ask that you respect the important place that Planned Parenthood has in the communities it serves and assure its ability to continue to serve these communities.

Thank you for your time.

AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research. AAUW, founded in 1881, is open to all graduates who hold an associate or higher degree from a regionally accredited college or university. In principle and practice, AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership.