

Paula Westwood
Executive Director, Right to Life of Greater Cincinnati
Written Proponent Testimony on
H.B. 36, Ohio Pastor Protection Act
February 21, 2017

Mr. Chairman and members of the House Community & Family Advancement Committee:

Right to Life of Greater Cincinnati is the largest Right to Life chapter in the state, covering Hamilton, Clermont, Butler, and part of Warren Counties in Southwest Ohio. The state-level Ohio Right to Life organization was founded in Cincinnati in 1971, and later moved to Columbus.

House Bill 36, the Ohio Pastor Protection Act is necessary to protect pastors from being forced to permit their faith-based facilities to be used by groups for activities that violate religious beliefs protected under the First Amendment. The bill confirms pastors' Constitutional right to decide which organizations may use, and what activities may take place, in their church facilities on church property.

Opponents are openly targeting churches to force them to rent church facilities to groups that oppose deeply held religious convictions. A pastor could be sued for declining, and with rogue judges ruling against conscience rights nationwide, the prospect of loss of religious liberty is real.

And while most House Bill 36 opponents are pressuring through homosexual activism, example other entities who could also undermine pastors' First Amendment rights include pro-abortion organizations such as Planned Parenthood, Satanist cults, the Ku Klux Klan, and more.

Ohio's Pastor Protection Act is ultimately about whether we stand firm on our nation's core beliefs in freedom of conscience and religious liberty. America's founding fathers from the beginning sacrificed homes, happiness, and life itself to establish these freedoms for every citizen.

Founding Father John Adams once stated:

We should begin by setting conscience free. When all men of all religions shall enjoy equal liberty, property, and an equal chance for honors and power we may expect that improvements will be made in the human character and the state of society. (letter to Dr. Price, April 8, 1785)

The Ohio Pastor Protection Act will help guarantee the free exercise of religion in this state. Please support House Bill 36 with your vote and ensure its passage into law.

Paula Westwood, Executive Director
Right to Life of Greater Cincinnati
1802 West Galbraith Rd.
Cincinnati, OH 45239
513/728-7870, x207
pwestwood@cincinnatirighttolife.org