

Dear Chairman Manning, Ranking Member Celebrezze, and members of the Ohio House of Representatives Criminal Justice Committee,

I am writing in opposition of SB 145 which would ban a safe medical procedure. The term “dismemberment” is inflammatory and does not accurately describe a procedure which is safer than a term pregnancy. Between 1998 and 2005, one woman died in childbirth for every 11,000 babies born, compared to one of 167,000 women who died due to abortion complications. In addition, the term “Viable” is in the bill and a D & E procedure is typically done between 12 and 20 weeks during which gestation a fetus would be unable to survive outside the uterus so technically the fetus is not viable as defined in SB 145.

As an OB/GYN who has practiced obstetrics and gynecology in Columbus, Ohio for the past 25 years I can share many stories of patients who have had to choose a D&E in the second trimester because a detailed ultrasound or genetic testing showed a lethal anomaly. It is a devastating decision for the family to make and these types of laws only make it more onerous but do not stop the patient from choosing a D&E. Instead those who can afford it will travel to other states while those who can't may choose other methods at the cost of their own life or health.

The World Health Organization(WHO) deems unsafe abortions one of the easiest preventable causes of maternal mortality. Around the world, 68,000 women die of unsafe abortion annually, making it one of the leading causes of maternal mortality. If Ohio continues to pass these restrictive abortion laws, we will continue to see our state's maternal mortality go up as it has in the last several years. Data from the WHO show an association between unsafe abortion and restrictive abortion laws which is what is happening in Ohio. The only proven way to reduce the number of abortions is to improve access to contraception and to provide free or low-cost contraception. The ACA which provided free contraception to women is one of the major reasons for the decline in abortion and teen pregnancy from 2010 to 2017. If you are interested in protecting the life of the unborn than work to improve access to contraception instead of passing laws which will only hurt women.

Less than 1% of abortions in Ohio are in the second trimester and by banning the D&E procedure you will not significantly decrease the number of abortions performed in Ohio. The intent of this law is to make a medically safe legal procedure illegal but at what cost to the women who live in Ohio? Does it justify a mother's death? Will it truly decrease abortions, or will it just drive women to other alternatives. If data from other states and countries are any indication than it will not affect the number of abortions performed but it will increase the number of women who die unnecessarily. The burden of unsafe abortion will increase the burden on the public health system in terms of women admitted for emergency care who may need blood products, anesthesia, antibiotics, and surgical specialists.

As a board-certified OB/GYN who practices in Ohio and votes in Franklin County I strongly encourage you not to vote for this bill.

Sent from my iPhone

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