

HB258 - Heartbeat Bill Testimony - Pastor Rodney Lord, Marietta, OH - 11/28/17

Mr. Chairman and members of the Health Committee, it is an honor to be here today. I am Pastor Rodney Lord standing here as a proponent of House Bill No. 258, the Heartbeat Bill.

I have the honor to lead a coalition of pastors in Southeast Ohio, so I am speaking on their behalf as well as my own. I know that I am also quite likely a representative voice for hundreds of clergy in this state and many more tens of thousands of their church members who are very passionate about the life of the unborn.

This legislation has captured the attention, the hope and the expectation of so many because of its clear, simple message and application. I am thrilled that similar legislation is now being furthered at the federal level as well. Like thousands of others, I have stood here in this capitol and in front of the United States Supreme Court praying for a turnaround in this fight for the unborn.

I read a story a few years ago about two young brothers, Bert and John Jacobs who dreamed of having their own t-shirt business. For 5 years they tried with very little success... traveling in an old van together, up and down the East Coast, going from college campuses to local businesses. Out of money, they almost gave up...until one day they decided to add these three simple words to their t-shirts..."**life is good.**" This became the turning point. These simple, but powerful words written on a t-shirt identified an idea, a desire, and a transcendent truth that is the very pulse in the heart of our people and birthed a 100 million dollar company, called **Life is Good.**

There is a verse in 1 Peter 3 that starts out.. "Whoever would love life and see good days ..."

The Heartbeat Bill represents a love and hope for life just as the heartbeat itself has always represented a hope of life.

I do a daily radio show in Southeast Ohio. I often speak of this Heartbeat Bill legislation and the need for courageous civil leaders that will lead it forward. You can imagine how devastated and betrayed we the church in Ohio felt when the Governor broke his promise and vetoed the previous legislation. In my 20 years of serving the church in Ohio, I have I have never seen it more engaged in civil matters than it is today. Seeing our US Representatives co sponsoring and excited about this bill at the federal level is evidence that the tide is shifting to protect the life of our children yet to be born.

Since I am a pastor, I will add a little Bible to my testimony here today. Historically, Israel was carried into exile in which they would remain for 70 years. In this circumstance of hopelessness and despair, the prophet Jeremiah writes a letter to the exiles and essentially tells them...carry on with life, build homes, get married, have children...and then you read this often quoted Scripture that is still true today. "I know the plans I have for you says the Lord, ...to give you a future and a hope." The prophet knew that freedom was on the horizon. His words of destiny were infused with life and hope.

I believe that House Bill 258 is also infused with hope and destiny and this legislative body has an historic opportunity and mandate to extend life and freedom to our unborn sons and daughters. I believe the eyes of the nation and the eyes of our Father are watching to see if “goodness and mercy will follow...all the days that are written in His book” for the unborn.

Before I was a father to seven children, I was a young newly married man in Dallas Tx. There is an image still vivid in my mind of over 20,000 people, young and old, moms and dads, children and grandparents, marching through the center of that vast metropolitan city on a beautiful spring day to stand for the life of the unborn in front of the very courthouse where the first *Roe v Wade* decision was cast. We were marching and praying that days like this one...would become a reality. Since that day, nearly 30 years ago, millions of Americans have marched, prayed, spoken out and have given sacrificially to see that life, hope, and freedom for the unborn would be restored. That the death sentence hanging over future generations yet to be born would be halted.

I know that as civil leaders you make regular decisions on important matters, even life saving legislation. It is my conviction that this is the most important life saving legislation that you will ever be called on to put forward and pass.

Thank you for joining us in this sacred pursuit, because thousands of unborn babies are waiting to discover for themselves that “Life is Good.....because life is from God. “

Thank you.