

Testimony of Parvaneh K. Nouri, MD/MPH Candidate  
Opposing House Bill 258  
December 6, 2017

My name is Parvaneh Nouri and I am a 3rd year medical student and Masters of Public Health student from Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine. I am currently the president of my school's chapter of Medical Students for Choice. I am here to provide testimony in opposition of House Bill 258 from the perspective of a physician in training.

From the medical perspective, I'd like to highlight how this bill is incredibly harmful - and I preface by saying it goes far beyond the ways in which this bill turns my colleagues, physicians skilled and dedicated to providing reproductive care to Ohioans everyday, into criminals:

The earliest time a fetal heartbeat *may* be detected is about 6 weeks, give or take a few days. Interestingly, this coincides with the same time many women first discover they are even pregnant at all. By prohibiting abortions after this time, the number of Ohioans that will be *forced* to leave and seek abortion care in another state will undoubtedly increase. Further, for the *many* Ohioans who are marginalized by poverty, discrimination, or unsafe domestic situations, securing means of transportation, childcare for their already existing children, or merely the safety to leave for any period of time is just not possible. This bill would make an already extremely difficult situation, impossible for many.

Everyday, we healthcare professionals of this state battle an increasing maternal mortality rate coupled with an alarmingly high infant mortality rate. We are tired of watching our patients die when put into situations that could have been prevented had we been enabled by our government to provide our patients with safe, high quality, and comprehensive reproductive care. If instituted, this bill will increase the number of Ohioans dying every year.

The American Congress of Obstetrics and Gynecology (otherwise known as ACOG), the body responsible for holding OB GYNs to professional and ethical standards of care released the following statement in regards to legislature that limits reproductive care:

"Access to reproductive services, including abortion care, is essential for millions of American women...By forcing women to carry pregnancies to term, regardless of their reasons for needing an abortion, these bans will compel high-risk women to endanger their lives, increasing maternal mortality. At a time when maternal mortality is already on the rise in the United States, we should be working together to improve women's health - not to attack it."

As for what this means for medical students, we make decisions on where we train for residency and who we serve based on the restrictions placed on our ability to care for patients. For those of us who want to work together with our government to provide

patients with comprehensive reproductive care, this bill quite simply means leaving this state. At present, Ohio is categorized as an “extremely hostile state” in regards to comprehensive reproductive care. This bill will undoubtedly cost Ohio countless qualified and compassionate care providers. And further, while this bill would criminalize an abortion provider, only a small subset of practicing physicians, it would attack the binding fellowship of all physicians.

I’ve said it before in this very room: Our healthcare system and government involvement have the *great* potential of operating as a mutual partnership; one that facilitates positive patient outcomes and preserves our global leadership in the highest standard of care. As a physician, I want to serve my patients under that standard of care, regardless of which state I practice in.

Thank you for your time and attention.