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COMMUNITY VALUES**

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December 4, 2018

To: Chairman Dave Burke
Vice Chairman Bill Beagle
Ranking Member Charleta Tavares
Members of the Senate Health, Human Services & Medicaid Committee

From: Aaron Baer
President, Citizens for Community Values

Re: Support of HB 258, the Heartbeat Bill

Chairman Burke, Vice Chairman Beagle, Ranking Member Tavares and Members of the Senate Health, Human Services & Medicaid Committee:

My name is Aaron Baer and I am the president of Citizens for Community Values, Ohio's Family Policy Council. Central to our mission is advocating for the inherent dignity of every human life, from its very beginning to natural death.

This is what I'm here to discuss with you today: dignity.

For nearly a decade the Ohio General Assembly has been debating the Heartbeat Bill. During this time, tens of thousands of lives have been lost – yet this very month, we have an opportunity to end this atrocity, and protect the dignity of unborn children and their mothers.

Critics of the Heartbeat Bill will often claim that if we protect the lives of these children, we are dooming them to a life of poverty and pain. But having worked in homeless shelters, and with hurting people, I can tell you that poverty and hardship in and of themselves do not rob people of dignity.

What robs Ohioans of dignity is looking at a child who may come into a difficult situation and saying they would be better off if they were never born.

The maliciousness of this argument can be best understood when you consider another crisis sweeping our state that is also claiming thousands of lives annually. The opioid epidemic. Consider this: in 2017, 20,893 lives were lost to abortion. In that same year, 4,854 lives were lost to drug overdose. Both nationally and locally, governments are spending millions to fight the opioid crisis – to save these lives lost to overdose.

Yet if we were to take the same posture towards fighting the opioid crisis as we take to fighting the abortion crisis, we would throw our hands up and walk away. After all, why should we fight to save the lives of these people? For many of them, there is only hardship, pain, and poverty ahead in life.



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I think everyone in this room recognizes how morally reprehensible this argument is – yet for some reason, many feel comfortable making the same argument about our most vulnerable Ohioans – the unborn.

And just like ministries and organizations that exist to help people out of poverty, and back on their feet on the other side of addiction, there are ministries and organizations across the state to help children born into poverty or hardship. This movement to fight abortion isn't just pro-birth, it's pro-child, pro-mother.

In closing, government does not grant dignity. God does – it is inherent in every Ohioan across racial, political, and socio-economic lines. However government can steal away our dignity when it says that we are less than human.

This is what abortion does. It tells unborn children they are not worthy of life, and it tells women they are not strong enough to carry life.

Please, support the Heartbeat Bill and send the message that Ohio believes every life is worth protecting.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

*Citizens for Community Values (CCV) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that endeavors to create an Ohio where God's blessings of life, family, and religious freedom are treasured, respected, and protected.
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