

December 5, 2018

Testimony of Jordyn Close  
Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee

Good morning, Chairman Burke, Ranking Member Tavares and members of the Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid committee. My name is Jordyn Close. I am an intern organizer for NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio, I am a storyteller with Youth Testify, a leadership program of the National Network of Abortion Funds and Advocates for Youth, I serve on the board of Women Have Options- Ohio, an abortion fund, and I have had an abortion.

When I was 18, I was in a long term relationship. We weren't using protection because it can be difficult to come by as a teen..

I found out I was pregnant when I was 7 or 8 weeks along -- that means under HB 258 I wouldn't have been able to get an abortion at all. My rights would have been stripped from me before I knew I needed them.

I knew immediately that choosing to end my pregnancy was the right choice for me. At the time I was living in Logan County, and I'm not sure if any of you have ever been to Bellefontaine, Ohio, but if you have you would know that I was surrounded by messages telling me that abortion was wrong. There was little to no compassion for any decision to have an abortion, let alone just not wanting to be pregnant. Yesterday, I heard someone compare abortion to slavery in support of this bill. It was appalling. Not only was it stigmatizing like the billboards in my community, but it's disrespectful to my ancestors who fought hard to escape the terrors of slavery and forced reproduction, sometimes choosing abortion because they couldn't bear to raise a child in captivity. To compare abortion to slavery is not only ahistorical, but it makes a mockery of all that our ancestors went through. As a Black woman I am dismayed that this argument would be used to deny me access to basic healthcare.

Fortunately, when I needed an abortion, I was able to get one. I found the nearest clinic in Columbus; it was called Founders, a little over an hour away from my home. I was fortunate enough to only run into one protester outside of the clinic when I went for my consultation.

When I got there, I was completely surprised by the level of compassion and care that the clinic staff provided to me. From the woman at the front desk to the nurses that took care of me afterward, their kindness and support reaffirmed the choice that I already knew was right for me.

The most memorable parts of my experience was everyone who was in the waiting room with me. All of our awkward small talk made it easier to digest for all of us. I had never been around people so willing to openly share their stories.

I hadn't realized until that moment that I had been in a state of constant panic. This might sound mundane and random to you, but I share it to show you that having an abortion is common and normal, like other medical procedures.

I have been hesitant to tell my story so publicly because to me it seems to pale in comparison to other stories I have heard and the lengths those people had to go through to receive basic healthcare. Transportation, raising money, emotional support, time off of work, those were all things that I could handle. I did have to wait a few weeks to get an abortion, and a bill like HB258 would have made those weeks impossible to wait and I would have never gotten my abortion..

When HB 258 was introduced I went public with my story for the first time on Facebook. It was too important not to. This is why I am here today testifying in opposition to HB 258. Outlawing abortion will not stop people from needing abortion care. It will just make it so much harder than it already is for people to get access. Buckeyes should not have to travel out of state just to get a 5-minute medical procedure. And the right to that procedure should not be stripped from us before we even know we're pregnant or have a moment to weigh our options. The Ohio state legislature should be protecting our constitutional rights, not passing laws that undermine them.. Every single one of you listening to this testimony loves someone who had an abortion, although you may not know it yet.

I never wavered in my decision. I never questioned what was right for me. I am happy with the decision I made. I will never regret my decision to have an abortion. Abortion is necessary. Abortion is healthcare.