

Kate Elliott
HB 258 – Six-Week Abortion Ban
Opponent Testimony
Ohio Senate Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee
December 5, 2018

Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Beagle, Ranking Member Tavares, and members of the Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee.

This bill bans abortions at the detection of a fetal heartbeat, which could be as early as six-weeks. I did not realize I was pregnant with my first child until I was nine weeks pregnant. Thankfully, I was joyfully ready and willing to be a parent and this surprise was not an unpleasant one. But I write on behalf of every woman who does not become pregnant alone, but will be demanded by this bill to bear the burden of pregnancy no matter her circumstances or the circumstances of her family.

I had a completely normal first pregnancy. And yet, after delivering my first daughter, I hemorrhaged. I needed multiple transfusions in order to survive. This legislation, put forward under the guise of “Right to Life,” is willfully endangering the lives of women. According to the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington, the United States is one of just eight countries to see a rise in maternal mortality over the past decade, and estimated that in 2013 we saw almost 800 deaths. Deaths of women who may already have children. Where is the concern for the lives of these women? Of these children?

If we are truly to be a state that values life, we must first show that we value the lives of mothers. We must not waste time and taxpayers’ dollars on bills that deny women their constitutional right to privacy in medical decisions. We must instead focus on sex education, access to birth control, improved health outcomes for pregnant women, and better postpartum supports so that women are not afraid to bring a child into this world. Because I will tell you, after my first experience, I was scared. I wanted another child, and I was fortunate to conceive and have another healthy, normal pregnancy. But I was filled with dread and fear of leaving my first daughter motherless in my pursuit of giving her a sister.

Thankfully, we are all here, and we are all healthy. But now I am scared for my two daughters. I am scared that they will be denied the thorough and appropriate medical care that they deserve because of a bill that threatens doctors with felonies for doing their job. I am scared that they may be forced into a pregnancy that their body is not ready for.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this dangerous bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I’m happy to take any questions you have.

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