

Testimony of Kelley Freeman
Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee
HB 258

Chairman Burke, Ranking Member Tavares and members of the Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid committee, my name is Kelley Freeman. I am organizer for NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio, a former abortion clinic worker, and the mother of a toddler.

First and foremost, I'd like to walk you through the first six weeks of pregnancy. Tracking pregnancy gestation is based on your last menstrual period, so the first two weeks of your pregnancy, you are in no way, shape, or form any kind of pregnant. At approximately two weeks past your last menstrual period, you engage in the sex that will lead to you becoming pregnant. At four weeks, you may have missed your next period, or not. If you're not looking for symptoms of being pregnant, you may miss them entirely. You have only actually been pregnant for two weeks at this point. At 5 weeks, you may actually realize your period is late (or you may not, if your period is irregular, or you have a form of birth control that delays your period). If you don't want to be pregnant, and you're quick, you may have an appointment for the following week, where you are, at a minimum, 6 weeks pregnant.

I come before you today to tell you of my experience as an abortion clinic worker. I have sat with patients who couldn't get through a sentence without vomiting due to extreme hyperemesis gravidarum, who were there because a partner sabotaged their birth control, because a partner got them pregnant without their consent, because they were in middle school, because they weren't yet ready to be a parent, because they didn't ever want to be a parent, and because they were already a parent and knew what it took to raise a child. Every single one of these patients was either at or past the 6 week limit.

Pregnancy is hard on your body in the best scenario. I adore my son, but he was also a planned, wanted, and healthy pregnancy. Having been through a 41 week pregnancy, I am intimately familiar with how difficult even a healthy pregnancy can be. If I were to get pregnant again right now, I would strongly consider terminating because I don't want to be pregnant again right now. Being pregnant often honestly just sucks, even if it's a wanted pregnancy. I can't imagine being forced to be pregnant against my will because the Ohio Legislature believes that they should be the ones making my healthcare decisions for me. Motherhood isn't easy, no, and not everyone who can get pregnant wants to be, or should be, or has to be a mother. To demand otherwise is an affront to the rights of the women of Ohio, and insulting to people who strive for parenthood.

I urge you to vote against House Bill 258. I urge you to consider trusting women to know what is best for them and their families and to leave them in the care of doctors who know what they're doing. Please don't legislate the most intimate parts of my body because my decisions with them make you uncomfortable.