

Iris E. Harvey
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, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in opposition to House Bill 258. My name is Iris E. Harvey, and I am President and CEO of Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio and Planned Parenthood Advocates of Ohio.

This bill would essentially make all abortions in the state of Ohio illegal by outlawing abortion at approximately six weeks, which is before most women even know that they are pregnant. It is important that abortion remains a safe and legal medical procedure in Ohio for a woman to consider if and when she needs it. Limiting the options available to medical professionals is not only foolish, it is dangerous for women in Ohio. Health care decisions should be made by the patient in consultation with a medical professional, not by a politician.

What is more, this bill is clearly unconstitutional. The United States Supreme Court has not wavered from its stance that abortion is a protected right, as demonstrated by the *Whole Woman's Health* decision just last year. This type of ban has been struck down as unconstitutional in every state where it has been passed into law. The resulting cost to the state in terms of both defending bad legislation and paying attorney's fees to those representing abortion providers has been in the millions. In this time of fiscal recession, is this really the best use of taxpayers' money?

Rather than using state time and resources to pursue individual legislators' extremist agendas, this committee should be focused on healthcare issues that truly matter to Ohioans, such as addressing infant mortality, the STD epidemic, the opiate crisis, and ensuring that the most vulnerable among us have access to adequate healthcare.

Planned Parenthood health centers will continue to provide life-saving health care like breast and cervical cancer screenings, STI treatment and testing, HIV testing and medically accurate sex education programs for women, men, and young people in the community who have turned to Planned Parenthood for those safe, reliable, confidential and judgment-free services for years.

It's time to stop criminalizing reproductive health care, interfering with the personal decisions of women, and substituting political agendas for the expertise of health care professionals.