

**Kelly Helton  
Tri-State Freethinkers  
HB 258 – Six-Week Abortion Ban  
Opponent Testimony  
Ohio Senate Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee  
December 5, 2018**

Chairman/woman Burke, Vice Chair Beagle Ranking Member Hayes, and Members of the Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee.

My name is Kelly Helton. I am the equal rights advocate for the Tri-State Freethinkers. The Tri-State Freethinkers are the largest freethought group in Ohio and one of the most active in the country. We are against House Bill 258, the 6-week abortion ban!

HB 258 is unconstitutional and interferes with women's right to health care. This committee has the right to their own personal deeply held religious beliefs, but the committee does not have the right to impose those beliefs on the women of Ohio. The 6-week abortion ban imposes a particular religious belief on all women in Ohio. It is not based on science. It is not based on medicine. We need policies in Ohio that are medically and scientifically accurate. We need policies that empower women, not ones that send us back to the dark ages.

If the goal of the committee is to reduce the need for abortions in Ohio then let us have an honest conversation about how to do this without harming women. Ohio does not require sexuality education. It is legal for groups to come into Ohio schools and lie to children about sex. It is happening every day. If you really wanted to reduce the need for abortions and help women, you would pass a law that requires comprehensive sex education, and scientifically accurate that includes consent. If you truly wanted to reduce the need for abortions in Ohio, then contraceptives and birth control would be free and easily accessible. You would not defund Planned Parenthood. You would increase funding for Planned Parenthood. States like Colorado have taken these steps and they reduced their teen pregnancy rate, STD, rate and teen abortions by 30-40%. Why are we wasting our time on abortion bans and restrictions that are harmful and unconstitutional? When we could be talking about a real policy change that would accomplish what we both want, reduced teen pregnancy and reduced need for abortions.

In school, I was taught that we have a government of the people, by the people, for the people. But when I look back and see 20 abortion bans and reproductive rights restrictions in 7 years it seems like Ohio has a government of the men, by the men, for the men without regard for women.

As a 14-year-old girl, I often find myself to be the voice of reason in a room full of unreasonable adults. I hope this is not the case today and you will vote no on HB 258!

Kelly Helton  
Equal Rights Advocate  
Tri-State Freethinkers