

December 5, 2018

HB 258 Testimony of Sarah Renee Keller
Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee

Spending yesterday in the South hearing room listening to the testimony in favor of HB 258 filled me with a unique sense of dread, a terror that's been caught in my throat since I heard of its passage through the Ohio House of Representatives.

At some point, listening to proponent after proponent talk in favor of a bill that puts the life of a cluster of cells above a woman, I began to feel so invisible I wondered if I was truly there at all. Saturated within the anti choice rhetoric and the discussion I've listened to on HB 258 was the devaluation of women. At what point did we become vessels instead of living beings?

At the very core of this bill is the notion that women are not to be trusted with their own healthcare, with their own bodies. HB 258 is a direct attack on women's autonomy, unconstitutional and vastly overreaching.

I could bring up the usual talking points: how many women do not realize they're pregnant at six weeks, how contraception fails even when people are careful. I could bring up the vast number of reasons women wish to terminate pregnancies, from financial to medical, or even as a response to violence. How this bill will result in a constitutional challenge, as it directly violates the Roe v Wade decision, but in all honesty these shouldn't be necessary.

As a woman, as a citizen of Ohio, I should not have to beg for the rights to my own body.

The passage of HB 258 is a horrific violation of women's rights, and would represent a huge step backward. Our healthcare should not be up for debate. Our bodies should not be up for debate. If you are truly interested in protecting the rights of your constituents, you will vote no on HB 258.

Make no mistake, I am living in terror. Most women I know are living in terror, seeing ourselves rapidly pushed back to a time without safe and accessible reproductive care. This denial is dehumanizing, it serves to reduce a person from woman to merely a womb. Please, see women. Acknowledge us for what we are— people, not incubators. Please, vote no on HB 258. We can not, we will not go back.