

December 5, 2018

HB 258 Testimony of Jennifer Mankin
Ohio Senate Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee

Chairman Burke, thank you for this opportunity to speak before the Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee. I come before you today to ask you to vote no on House Bill 258, the six-week abortion ban.

As of 2017, according to a Gallup poll, 70% of Republicans agreed that abortion should be legal in some or all cases, and in 2018, NBC and the Wall St Journal found that 52% don't want to see Roe v Wade overturned.

Yet, wedge-issue, right-wing extremists, such as the author of the HB 258, the six-week abortion ban, Jane Folger Porter, continue pushing tighter and tighter restrictions on the safety of women's reproductive health. They do this not because they are representing a grassroots constituency, but because they are ideologues driven to bring their misconstrued interpretation of biblical law into secular governance. Besides expressing her hopes to push the question of abortion to the supreme court, a legal battle that will turn costly, Porter is a birther who went after Obama's presidency, also claiming he was a Society agent. She believes same-sex marriage points to the end of the world, and supports conversion therapy. She was a spokesperson for Roy Moore during his controversial campaign, denying the credibility of his accusers on baseless claims and comparing, at one point, homosexuals to predators.

I bring up these things to highlight a legacy that anti-abortion opponents have historically shared: bigotry, racism, an attempt and desire to control and oppress marginalized classes. Since the 1840s when white male physicians wanted to ensure the anglo classes maintained supremacy by preventing wealthy white women from aborting. Through the 1970s when evangelicals seeking a political base, turned away from Carter who was fighting them on segregation in schools, and toward Reagan willing, despite his past pro-choice history, to help drive anti-abortion legislation into the national consciousness. Blocking a woman's right to choose has never been about morality so much as it has been about manifest destiny.

And this colonial, patriarchal mentality cuts both ways. As much as it's about preserving and increasing the presence of upwardly-mobile, white, Christian nuclear family; it's about destroying the lives of everyone else. When critical healthcare is denied to women who are already being faced with an onslaught of restrictions that have devastated various parts of their life, their safety and well-being is put at risk. Transportation across state lines to secure abortion where it is still legal becomes the sole privilege of those of means. Loopholes and gray markets ensure that heartbeats don't show up for those with well-lined pockets, while those less fortunate are faced with more months to feed.

Make no mistake, abortions have happened since the beginning of time, since before the medical-industrial complex even had the ability to know if a woman was pregnant prior to the baby kicking. And they will continue as the sovereign right of individuals, even if the physician and political classes refuse to acknowledge that right. So the only thing you vote on when you vote on HB 258 is whether you believe in safety and freedom for all women, and whether your religion has a mandate of white supremacy or not.