

Cecilia Ellis
HB 258 – Six-Week Abortion Ban
Opponent Testimony
Ohio Senate Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee
December 11, 2018

Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Beagle, Ranking Member Tavares, and members of the Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today.

My name is Cecilia Ellis and I am from Cleveland. Over the last ten years of my life, I have been a Planned Parenthood patient, advocate, volunteer, and staff member. The care and support that I have received from Planned Parenthood has contributed enormously to who, and where, I am today.

I am strongly opposed to HB 258.

Throughout high school, college, and my time working with Planned Parenthood, I have known many women who have made their own personal decisions about whether or not to receive abortion services. As a teenager, even before I began being sexually active, my greatest fear was an unplanned pregnancy. The thought of dealing with the realities and complexities of that situation would keep me awake at night. I was raised by a single mother in a home where economic stability was never guaranteed and went without health insurance for intermittent periods of time. I was always aware of the tightness of our budget and the lack of wiggle room it allowed for even emergency situations. Thankfully, Planned Parenthood was there for me and provided access to regular gynecological exams, birth control, and the peace of mind that comes from knowing they've got me covered, without shame, judgement, or reservations.

This brings me to today. I stand here, as an independent 24-year-old woman, and implore you to consider the impact a harmful bill like this would have on women who don't need any more fear in their lives. Women need compassionate, comprehensive care, regardless of their circumstance. And that includes abortion services. It isn't for you, or anyone, to decide what a woman needs when dealing with her pregnancy. Women don't turn to politicians for advice about mammograms, prenatal care, or cancer treatments. Politicians should not be involved in a woman's personal medical decisions about her pregnancy. Abortion is a deeply personal and often complex decision for a woman. You can't make that decision for someone else.

This bill would ban abortion after six weeks which is before most women know they are pregnant. Removing the option of receiving abortion services, even though they could be life-saving, is placing an unconstitutional and unnecessary burden on those most in need of care, empathy, and autonomy. Especially in the case of women who are already struggling economically, like myself, and other women even more so.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this dangerous bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I will now take any questions you may have.