

TOPIC: HB 258 (6-week Abortion Ban) Opponent Testimony
HEARING DATE: December 11, 2018
SUBMITTED BY: Rabbi Jessica Shimberg (The Little Minyan Kehilah)

Good morning, Chairman Burke and Ranking Member Tavares. I am Rabbi Jessica Shimberg. I serve as the spiritual leader of The Little Minyan Kehilah in Columbus, Ohio.

I have been a resident of Central Ohio most of my life. My family moved to Columbus just before I entered 1st grade, and I returned after graduating from college and working in Boston to attend The Ohio State University College of Law. As an attorney, I worked for Franklin County, the State of Ohio, and in private practice.

I come before you today to vehemently oppose HB 258. As a rabbi and pastoral counselor, a former attorney, mediator and facilitator of conflict resolution, and a mother of two college-age sons, I beseech you to oppose this bill.

I have been privileged to live at a time in human history when my reproductive choice has been protected by Roe v. Wade. I am aware that I stand on the shoulders of women who lived in dark times in this country when our legal choices were restricted, endangering our safety and sending the message that our bodies did not fully belong to us — that women could not be trusted to do what is right for ourselves, our families, our future children, and our communities. We have come a long way in how we treat girls and women in America. We must not return to policies that restrict our agency over our bodies and force us into situations that threaten our well-being.

Decisions about women's health and well-being must remain with women. It is dark and dangerous to substitute the moral posture of certain legislators (based solely on those lawmakers' religious beliefs vs. medical or public health concerns) for a woman's own judgment, spiritual and theological discernment, and deliberation about her own physical and mental health and how her reproductive choices impact her future.

Restricting a woman's choice does not save life; it endangers life. As a woman, I am deeply troubled by the impact HB 258 would have on all women. As a rabbi, I am further concerned by the way that this proposed legislation violates Jewish values, law, and practices.

Thank you for your time and careful discernment.