

Testimony

Ohio State Legislature, Committee Hearing

Topic: HB 258 (6-week Abortion Ban)

Hearing Date: Dec. 11, 2018

Submitted by: Rev. Dr. Marian Stewart

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Chairman Burke and Ranking Member Tavares,

HB 258 outlawing abortions after 6 weeks is anything but pro-life.

This bill is a ban that sends doctors and medical professionals to jail. It makes no exceptions for rape or incest and has inadequate protections for health of the mother. It strips women of their rights to control their own bodies. It is designed to keep women and children in poverty. It is not pro-life.

This bill does nothing to acknowledge that women do not get pregnant by themselves. It does nothing to protect women from men who rape their bodies. It does nothing to save the life of a mother at risk of dying. This bill verges on idolizing the unborn. It does nothing to support the life of a baby once it takes its first breath.

When I was young, my mother taught me that unless I could take care of what I already had, then I could not have more. That is good advice in all sorts of ways, but in this case, our leaders need to figure out how to end poverty, solve drug addiction, reduce crime, and fully support public education. Most importantly, enact green solutions so that we can all have a future on this earth, including the yet-to-be born.

My faith, as a Unitarian Universalist, calls upon me to respect the inherent worth and dignity of every person. It does not call on me to respect just some people. It calls on me to respect all people, including women, children, and men who care.

This bill does not do that. It singles out women and their health care providers as a group to be punished. It calls out women to be second-class citizens with no rights to decide what is best for them. It says that only those who have the power to get women pregnant have real power. This bill says women don't matter.

This bill might as well be called the coat-hanger bill. History tells us that abortion will not go away. This bill will force women into back alleys and risky do-it-yourself abortions. There are many stories I could tell. Today, our real choice, our only choice, is whether or not abortion is safe.

If we do not protect the rights to healthcare, including reproductive healthcare for women, then we all lose. Why bring more life into this world when only certain lives are actually respected and supported?

If all life has inherent worth and dignity, then we best get working on that ideal rather than seeing how fast we can erode respect for the life we already have.

I have a religious voice. I am pro-ALL-life, including the living. And that includes women and their right, our right, to make our own healthcare decisions.

Thank you.

I would be happy to answer any questions the committee members may have.