



Rep. Candice Keller
Sponsor Testimony on House Bill 68
Ohio House Health Committee
February 26, 2019

Thank you, Chairman Merrin, Vice Chair Manning, and Ranking Member Boyd for the opportunity to testify in favor of HB 68, the Heartbeat Bill. I thank each of you today who have already voted in favor of this bill back in 2016 and 2018.

As Ohio continues to lead in so many areas, we have also worked diligently to defend the lives of the innocent unborn. For nine years, we have fought this fight to protect children. The Ohio House had the courage to lead on this bill a number of times and in the last General Assembly, a stunning 61 members supported it.

This issue is a difficult one and causes extraordinary controversy and passion on both sides of the aisle. The driving force is the potential we see in our ability to save the lives of so many children in Ohio, upwards of 20,000 a year.

We just passed the 46th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, which has caused the deaths of more than 65 million babies in this country since 1973. January is Sanctity of Human Life month where we commemorate those lost to abortion and our nation just saw tens of thousands of pro-lifers in Washington demonstrating on a most emotional day to advocate for the extension of protection of unborn children and their mothers.

Now, once again we ask you to consider all that is at stake on what is the hottest topic in our nation today. While we have led the way on this issue in Ohio, we have not yet succeeded in passing this law. Now, as we see virtual

infanticide condoned in states such as New York, Vermont, and Virginia, the spotlight once again is on Ohio.

As Ohio goes, so goes the nation. Others have successfully moved similar legislation into law. There is no doubt that those moves by states have saved the lives of many children and protected their safety. Will Ohio once again rise to that standard?

During my 12 years of doing pro-life work, I have heard many arguments advocating for abortion. There are really only four common arguments that attempt to justify abortion. However, each argument falls short.

One is that something “that small” is not really a “life.” However, does body size determine your value? My husband is larger than me. My children are larger than my grandchildren. Do women and toddlers deserve fewer rights than those who are larger than they?

Secondly, the level of development – You were less developed inside the womb but a 2-year old girl is less developed than a 21-yr. old woman. They don’t have a developed reproductive system yet. Are they less human?

Thirdly, environment – You were inside the womb. Now you’re outside the womb. How does a journey of 8” down the birth canal suddenly transform you from a non-human to something of value?

And lastly, degree of dependency – Sure, you were dependent on your mother. Does that make you non-human? Conjoined twins often share vital organs. We don’t intentionally kill them because they cannot live independently of one another. The elderly and infirm are often dependent on others to survive. Are they less human than a younger, healthier adult?

Abortion is not without risks to the mother and we must always focus on the health and welfare, both mental and physical, of the citizens of Ohio. The Ohio Department of Health issues statistics periodically on the number of women in Ohio who have experienced detrimental physical incidents from abortion. Excessive bleeding, perforated uteruses, sterility and even death can occur during and following an abortion.

The trauma of an abortion often causes lasting, even lifelong, effects on the mental health of a woman. Many suffer from fibromyalgia, depression,

substance abuse, thoughts of suicide, sleeplessness, an inability to sustain lasting relationships, eating disorders, emotional numbness, anxiety and panic attacks, flashbacks, multiple follow-up abortions, a pattern of “repeat pregnancies”, discomfort around newborns and pregnant women, and fear of pregnancy.

If we truly care about women and their well-being, we can start by telling them the truth about their bodies and what’s happening to them. This has nothing to do with morality. We are dealing in facts and science now. Women have a right to know the truth about what is happening to their bodies and how it will impact them the rest of their lives. The law in Ohio must protect ALL citizens, not only the

Ohio can illustrate to the rest of the nation that we will protect women and children by recognizing that a beating heart stops a life. Women give birth to babies. We have children. When their heart starts beating, the State has a right to protect that life and abide by our Constitution in recognizing that they have a right to life.

Thank you, Chairman Merrin. I’m open to any questions from committee members.