

Danielle Black
Senate Bill 23 – Six-Week Abortion Ban
Opponent Testimony
Ohio House Health Committee
March 26, 2019

Chairman Merrin, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Boyd, and Members of the Ohio House Committee,

I'm speaking to you as a mother for three living children, and two dead. The right to life is not just a child's life, it's the right of women to choose if they want to use their bodies to continue a pregnancy that relies on their physical wellness.

The condition of the pregnancy and when the fetus is counted as a human are immaterial. What we are talking about is requiring a woman to use her uterus when she does not want to. We would not require someone with two healthy kidneys to give one of them to someone in need no matter if that someone would otherwise die. Beyond that, there is a great discrepancy between how many value the unborn and how they value conceived children. We cannot be pro-life when it comes to a fetus but neglect the needs of children and families all over Ohio.

This brings me to another very important point: forcing women to birth children that they would not have chosen to. My daughter, Ella, was born at 39 weeks with hypoplastic left heart syndrome. She was set to have a three stage surgery, the first one when she was just one day old. A medical student at Children's Hospital mentioned that she will need a heart transplant at 12 years old, and we were taken back. None of the several experts we had consulted over the months had told us that the surgeries were palliative rather than curative. No one had told us that all the hardship Ella would face in her early years would only be a preamble to the trauma of a heart transplant.

Ella lived for only three months. By the time we found out she had medical problems it was too late to get a legal abortion. If I had been given the choice, I don't think I would have chosen for my child to endure open heart surgery, and a short life lying infused with tubes and needles in hospital rooms. Women need to have choices.

Because rates of abortion vary by race and class, passing restrictive laws on abortion will affect different races and classes disproportionately. For instance, among white women, 10% of pregnancies currently end in abortion; among black women, 28% of pregnancies end in abortion (CDC). A variety of socioeconomic forces drive much of this discrepancy, and passing restrictions on abortion further exacerbates the effects of those forces.