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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, thank you for allowing me to testify today against Senate Bill 23, the six-week abortion ban.

In December, I terminated a much-wanted pregnancy for medical reasons via dilation and extraction. Three days later, Governor John Kasich signed Senate Bill 145 into law, banning dilation and extraction procedures.

My husband and I were thrilled to discover we were pregnant. We had miscarried our first pregnancy and were lucky enough to get pregnant again quickly.

By week 14, I was bleeding heavily and decided to do non-invasive genetic testing. The sonographer spent an hour scanning me. Shortly afterwards, she left the room to speak with the doctor.

The doctor returned with her very quickly. The baby was not growing as fast as she should be. The placenta was quite large and there was almost no amniotic fluid. Her fingers were fused together. She very likely had a genetic condition called triploidy, but we couldn't know for sure unless we did invasive testing. She broke this news to me gently; she cried with me and was so incredibly kind.

Triploidy is a condition where a baby has three copies of all of their chromosomes. It is always lethal. Most babies with triploidy are miscarried early on, and if they are carried to term they are typically stillborn or die within their first minutes of life. I am sure I read the words in an anatomy and physiology textbook. I never thought that it was something that could happen to me or my baby. More testing confirmed the diagnosis.

Our sweet baby wouldn't live past her own birthday, if she even got there. The longer I waited, the greater my risk for developing preeclampsia as well as choriocarcinoma, a rare cancer that can occur in abnormal pregnancies.

I was told my options were to terminate the pregnancy or try to carry her to term, knowing that she would suffocate to death in her first minutes of life due to undeveloped lungs. I know this pain all too well. Working the ICU, I have held the hands of many patients whose lungs are not strong enough to survive. We are able to give medications to ease the pain, but it is never pretty. I couldn't imagine going through the rest of my pregnancy, having strangers congratulate me and ask when I'm due, knowing that my baby would have to go through that. Knowing that I would never take her home. For me and my family, abortion was the only choice.

For those of you who think you would choose differently, that you would be the "Choose life!" hero in my story, be grateful that you will likely never be in my shoes.

In the same breath that I was told of my baby's fatal diagnosis, I was told that I would not be able to receive a termination in any hospital. No hospital in Ohio would do it; and regardless, my insurance wouldn't cover it. We had to get in contact with our local abortion clinic.

At Planned Parenthood, I was given a packet. The words on the front said I had three options: abortion, adoption or parenting. I thought to myself, well I don't think any adoptive parents are in the market for a dead baby. And parenting. Wow. What I wouldn't give to parent this baby. To kiss her, hold her, support her and love her for the rest of my life. That wasn't an option either.

I was making this choice out of love. And I am so grateful that I had that choice. I realize that there is no hierarchy of reasons for seeking an abortion. A crisis pregnancy is a crisis pregnancy, and no woman, or family, should have that decision made for them by their government. Neither I, nor my child, would have benefitted from carrying her to term.

That choice is ripped away with every abortion ban signed into law in Ohio, including if this bill becomes law.

The choice belongs to women who desperately want their babies, but cannot, for whatever reason, bring them into this world. It belongs to victims of sexual assault, whose pregnancies were formed under violent circumstances. It belongs to the sister or cousin whose abortion you don't know about and might not have approved of; for the coworker or friend-of-a-friend who had to drive to another state or borrow money just to get the healthcare they needed.

The choice does not belong to politicians.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote *No* on Senate Bill 23. Thank you for your time and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.