

**Kristen Robideaux**  
**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 the opportunity to share my opposition to SB 23, the 6 week abortion ban.

My name is Kristen Robideaux and I have lived in Toledo, OH, my entire life. I love my state and I am very proud of where I live, but I also struggle to come to terms with all of the medical harm that has been done to my body due to religious stigma presenting itself in our society and preventing us from accessing information.

Because of the religious, so-called moral, shame that has crept into how we conduct sexual health and education, this state has already tried to kill me. When I was 16, I had my menstrual cycle for almost seven weeks straight. Seven weeks of mood swings, of bleeding, and of not really understanding what was happening in my body. Having attended a lot of church services with friends as a child and receiving poor sex ed in public school, I had been systematically taught it was not right to ask about my reproductive organs unless I was planning on tracking my cycle to get pregnant. All the while, my period tried to kill me by taking all of the blood out of my body. After the fourth week of not being able to climb a flight of stairs without passing out, not making it through the school day without falling asleep, and sleeping 17 out of 24 hours a day, I realized that this was in fact not teenage hormones and something much more serious. I was only a few ounces away from needing emergency blood transfusions to stay alive.

10 years later, in 2019, I am relatively healthy thanks to birth control, which I am grateful for every day that is accessible to me, since it is still not for many Ohioans. Before I had my medical crisis, it was my regular cycle for me to go several months before my next period. I had never been sexually active at the time, so I had no reason to worry about being pregnant. The more people I meet every single day, the more I meet people who are in similar boats and take this type of menstrual cycle as normal. The six week ban is ludicrous because it not only expects people to know that they are pregnant in six weeks, it also expects them to take care of all of the hurdles it takes to get an abortion that this government has put in place before those six weeks are up. Hurdles such as finances, necessitating more than one appointment before getting an abortion, and making healthcare coverage financially impossible for folks to go to appointments to determine if they're pregnant or keep up with their prenatal health.

The dominance that Christianity has on our society is trying to push itself even further with this abortion ban. Everyone present knows that this bill is not medically necessary and will actually end up preventing medical providers from being able to complete their jobs. My story is one of hundreds of thousands belonging to Ohioans that show that bodies are different and unpredictable. No one should be deciding medical care except for a patient and their medical provider. If this government truly cares about lives, they will stop terrorizing abortion providers and let them continue to practice and provide their services to Ohio patients. Being pro-life is not about fetuses, it is about protecting those of us already here. Things such as comprehensive sex education, quality, accessible medical coverage for everyone, access to contraceptives, and education are the best things to curb the public health crises in our state.

My body has already tried to kill me once due to cultural pressure to not discuss sexual health. If this bill passes, I ask what other laws are we going to let religious morals influence next. There have already been several attacks on contraceptive access in the last few years in Ohio. If a religious group decides that I no longer get to have access to birth control because it will make me immoral, how is it "pro-life" to take away the one thing that regulates my body to keep me alive? In this same essence, it is not pro-life to force anyone to carry a pregnancy to term if they do not have the means or want to do so. Please acknowledge and call this bill what it is instead of manipulative terms like "pro-life", when in reality it is actually forced birth.

As the legislators, it is your duty to protect Ohioans and their rights, free from 3rd party interests. As a citizen, someone who pays your salary, and a person with a uterus, I ask that you protect my body and my right to exist before the hypothetical. Vote against SB 23.