

Testimony of Nicole Cushler

House Health Committee

S.B. 23

March 23, 2019

Good afternoon Chairman Merrin, Ranking Member Boyd and members of the House Health committee. My name is Nicole Cushler. I was a pro-life Republican until the unthinkable happened to me.

Four months ago I was five months pregnant with our second son. During our routine 20 week Ultrasound my OBGYN found a slight issue that quickly spiraled into our worst possible nightmare. Our baby had severe anomalies, requiring multiple life-threatening immediate surgeries within the first 24 hours of life to attempt to reconstruct a missing esophagus, detach the stomach from the lungs, open heart surgery to create a missing heart wall, surgery to create a colostomy, create a missing anus, and correct severe spinal deformations. There is no known genetic nor environmental cause of his severe VACTERL diagnosis. My beloved son would've suffered every minute he was on Earth. This torture is not God's will. Once my baby was born there are no protections or "comfort only" measures. He would have been taken from me and died scared, alone, and in extreme pain.

Sometimes as a mother you can give peace or you can give life, but you cannot give both. My heart is shattered but out of love for my son and the unending pain and suffering he would endure we sent him to heaven. What mother would go this far in pregnancy only to terminate on a whim? They wouldn't, because my abortion doesn't fit society's stereotype of abortions. People having late abortions are families like mine who are torn apart but choose to make the best decision for their child.

Pro-choice doesn't mean you ever have to agree with the decision, pro-choice simply means you support legislation that allows medical professionals to have a discussion regarding each specific situation. S.B. 23 restricts abortion before it is even possible to know of fetal defects and this bill restricts the ability of a woman to make any decisions about the one person who depends on her. Humane treatments should apply to EVERY stage of life.

Every situation is completely different but they all deserve professional care and counsel. Please do not prevent families like mine from having access to abortion medical care. You truly have no idea how you would react until you are in this nightmare trying to choose the right path, because all options are devastating.

Please reject S.B. 23 to ensure that all Ohioans have access to the abortion care they need by allowing medical professionals to continue to counsel with their patients for each specific situation.

I apologize I am not there in person for this testimony but please reach out to me if you have any questions or comments. Thank you for your time.

Best Regards,

Nicole Cushler  
Cincinnati, OH