

Dear Chairman Merrin,

We write to you as a group of medical students, future physicians who will one day be responsible for the lives of our patients. We refuse to remain silent as policies based on poor data & bad science endanger the lives of those we seek to heal.

House Bill 68 is exactly that: legislation that is not rooted in sound medical research, & that instead will lead to dangerous consequences for patient and provider alike. Detection of fetal cardiac activity is not a reliable prognostic indicator, and its use as such in this bill serves as a biased, emotional argument rather than a scientific one. It also cannot be used as a universal indicator of personhood, as the bill language "unborn human individual" implies. This is especially true given that many women are not even aware of their pregnancy until after fetal cardiac activity can be detected.

Further, conversations about pregnancy termination should happen between patient & physician, as with almost any other medical or surgical procedure. Pregnancy complications that lead to these conversations may not present as immediate, or emergency, concerns, a fact which the bill does not take into account. Additional provisions regarding cases of rape or incest, or threats to the mother's mental health, were notably not added, although nationally, 77% of Americans believe abortion should be legal in cases of rape or incest, and 61% believe it should be legal when the mother's mental health is threatened.

The most effective method of reducing abortions across Ohio is comprehensive sex education & contraception access. Restricting legal abortion will not reduce the number of women who try to terminate their pregnancy. It will result in more back alley, unregulated procedures, which jeopardize the lives of both mother & child.

By enacting unnecessary and dangerous legislation that prevents doctors from fully caring for their patients, you will be driving away physicians from the rural areas that need them most. As medical students & future professionals, we want to see healthy women delivering their babies in a safe environment, where the infant can grow to their full potential. We, too are pro-life - life that might start at conception, but goes all the way to the grave. This bill is antithetical to our principles as caregivers, and to the principles of this great country: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We strongly urge you to vote against it.

Signed,

Shreekari Tadepalli, President, Medical Students for Choice

Lauren Guest, President, Obstetrics and Gynecology Interest Group