

Griffin Browning
Senate Bill 23 – Six-Week Abortion Ban
Opponent Testimony
Ohio House Health Committee

Chairman Merrin, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Boyd, and members of the House Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee. Thank you for hearing my testimony. My name is Griffin Browning and I am opposed to Senate Bill 23.

I was raised to be compassionate, empathetic, and protective of the people closest to me. I hope, in that way, that I remind you of your sons and grandsons.

I was also taught to be cautious, responsible, and to make smart decisions. In spite of all their efforts, I have made choices and mistakes that would disappoint my parents. I'm sure that, in that way, I also remind you of your sons and grandsons.

I am here today because I support women, I respect women, I believe women, and I will protect women. I am asking you to do the same. I oppose this bill because I believe restricting the healthcare choices of anyone violates the values of compassion and empathy.

In 2016, I found out that my partner was pregnant. At the time, she was in college and working part-time to support herself. When she contacted me, she had already made the decision to abort the pregnancy and was asking for financial support for the procedure. As a college student, this was not an expense she would be able to take on and her only other option would be to contact her parents for help. I was able to pay for all of her appointments and the procedure.

I supported her choice whole-heartedly and I was grateful for the opportunity to help and protect her when she needed it most. My experience with abortion was an opportunity to employ the lessons that my parents instilled in me. She has since graduated from college and loves her career.

Ensuring access to reproductive healthcare and supporting the hard choices of women is an exercise in compassion. The decision to have an abortion is one that many of us in this room will never have to make. The irony of me standing in front of other men to testify on behalf of women's healthcare is emblematic of just how marginalized women's voices and stories can be.

We are asking women to stand in front of men and justify why they should have autonomy over their own bodies. I'd like to ask you to imagine that you were on the other side of this room, to stand where I am standing, facing a group of people that don't look like you, and have to plead with them for your most basic human rights. Sitting where you are now, I hope that you were also raised to feel empathy.

I hope that you are men that respect, support, and protect women.

You have the chance to make the world a more compassionate place. That's the world that I was raised to expect, to build, and to maintain. I hope you are raising your sons to live in that same world.

I ask you to consider my testimony and compassionately VOTE NO on Senate Bill 23. Thank you.