

SB23 - Heartbeat Bill Testimony - Pastor Rodney Lord, Marietta, OH - 4/2/19

House Health Committee

Chairman Merrin, Vice Chairman Manning, ranking member Boyd & members of the Health Committee, it is an honor to be here today. I am Pastor Rodney Lord standing here as a proponent of Senate Bill No. 23, the Heartbeat Bill.

I have the honor to lead a coalition of pastors in Southeast Ohio, so I am speaking on their behalf as well as my own. I know that I am also quite likely a representative voice for hundreds of clergy in this state and many more tens of thousands of their church members who are very passionate about the life of the unborn.

All of life is a story. When each one of us arrives on the scene we are woven into the bigger story. We become part of the fabric of life...unique, distinct, and our part actually changes the narrative. Some of us were welcomed with great fanfare and great expectation like my first grandchild Avery Ryan who was born just a few weeks ago. For others, it may be a very different story. What we are discovering through many testimonies is that those lives that were unexpected, unintended and even unwanted can also become powerful characters on the stage of life. Some are adopted, others simply push through their difficult family and sometimes impossible lives. Their stories are powerful and compelling about overcoming the odds and becoming fathers, mothers, leaders and yes...even world changers.

Shall we play God and decide the potential or benefit to society in each of these lives? Can we predict the very purpose and destiny of each of these unborn children? The answer should be a clear and emphatic NO. It is not a matter of class, race, convenient timing, or affordability. If it was about affordability then my twin girls who are our 5th and 6th children, who are 4.0 students, playing division 2 softball at one of our great universities here in Ohio...would not be here and not part of our family's story, the community's story and Ohio's story.

Stories usually have vulnerable characters, a great conflict, and a hero. I believe the Heartbeat Bill has all three. **The vulnerable characters are** the unborn children wanting to experience life and live to become part of the greater story. **The conflict** is not necessarily people who are taking a side. In fact, the majority of the nation and Ohio is for this bill. The conflict has been the delayed legislation that over the years has been blocked by political maneuvering, causing the Heartbeat Bill to be a victim of its own late term abortion. **The heroes**... I believe the heroes are in front of me today as well as the majority of legislators in Ohio who year after year have said "yes" to the Heartbeat Bill but have been thwarted by political pressure and a political agenda.

Today we watch the horrors of liberal states like New York and Virginia celebrating the right to kill babies ready to be born. This is pure and unchecked evil. If there was ever a day when babies need heroes, it's today. As Ohio goes so goes the nation. This state, that carries so much influence in the nation, is being watched by the entire world. I am aware that this legislation is now in 20 some other states. Hope for life is spreading across the nation like wildfire. It is time for us, the most influential state, to pass the Heartbeat Bill. When it does, it will be like dominos falling. This is a new day. This is the day of heroes...the real-life kind that actually step up and save lives. Thank you.