

REV. DR. CHRIS DAVIES
HOUSE HEALTH COMMITTEE HEARING ON SENATE BILL 23
OPPONENT TESTIMONY | APRIL 2, 2019

Access to abortion is an issue of faith.

The General Synod of the United Church of Christ believes that God created each one of us in God's own image and named us as good. We believe each one of us is a gift of God, and we are fearfully and wonderfully made into complex and sacred beings. We believe God created us with moral agency to choose what is best for ourselves and our families, and that choice includes the discernment of whether or not abortion is right for us.

Senate Bill 23 proposes to ban abortion after six weeks past conception. Similar bills have been ruled unconstitutional already by judges in Arkansas, Iowa, Idaho, and more. Ohio is one in a series of state-level bills that seeks to escalate the challenge to the legality of abortion all the way to the Supreme Court, where the possibility of a federal overturn on *Roe v. Wade* is present. At least 20 abortion cases in various stages of judicial review could cause such a result.

As a Christian pastor, I speak out against the tightening restrictions on abortion because of my faith. Communities need access to every choice "to maintain personal bodily autonomy, have children, not have children, and parent the children we have in safe and sustainable communities" ([SisterSong's definition of reproductive justice](#)).

I witness that without access to comprehensive healthcare, we are not affirming the full humanity of people already marginalized among us. Without access to abortion, we send a message that only those with money and power can get the procedures that they need (whether legally or illegally).

By restricting abortion, we ignore the lives and well-being of those already present among us and hurting. We rob people of access to the health care that they need to make family choices in alignment with their own faith.

I believe it's our work to stand in the gap between the world where we are and the world God calls us into. Because of my faith, I serve on the board at [Preterm](#) where our mission of intersectional feminism and safe, compassionate sexual health care has led the way for journeying alongside people with love and compassion at some of the hardest choice points of their lives. Because of my faith, I support movements led by those they are most impacting, like the work of [SisterSong](#), and I volunteer locally with [Preterm](#) to directly support those who cannot afford the life-saving abortions they need.

I urge you to vote against Senate Bill 23. Trust the moral agency of women and pregnant people to decide what is best for their own reproductive lives.