

REV. JULIA CORY
HOUSE HEALTH COMMITTEE HEARING ON SENATE BILL 23
OPPONENT TESTIMONY | APRIL 2, 2019

Chair Merrin, Vice Chair Manning, and Ranking Member Boyd:

Good morning/afternoon, I am Rev. Julie Chapman Cory. I am an ordained minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and I currently serve as Sr. Minister at First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Kent, Ohio. As such, I look at this issue from a pastoral perspective. In that light, my views on this issue are formed by how we care for — not how we punish or shame women making this decision.

It has been my honor and a horror to have heard the stories of women and their families as they have struggled with the difficult and intensely personal issue of abortion. It is an honor to have them trust me, but at times it can be horrific because the decision these women ultimately make is one that is made out of grief, brokenness, and sadness. Rarely is this decision made lightly.

My father was an OB-GYN for almost 60 years in the Columbus area. His career included long stretches of volunteer work at Planned Parenthood, the establishment of a women's health clinic on the East side of Columbus — where women could receive affordable prenatal care. He also worked for over 10 years for the State of Ohio, providing women's health care at the women's prison in Marysville.

He believed strongly that access to affordable prenatal care is a right all women (not just some) should have. He also believed that women should have agency over their own bodies and that women are able to decide what is best for their own reproductive lives.

My father also knew and taught me that restrictive and punitive laws such as SB 23 will not ever end abortions. They will only end safe abortions. The passage of a bill such as SB 23 will not only force women to seek out illegal and unsafe abortions, but it also seeks to compromise the sacred oath of medical professionals who desire to provide the best care possible for their patients.

But no one had to teach me the common-sense facts that most women do not know they are pregnant at 6 weeks, or if the pregnancy is endangered by that time. I also believe it is common compassion that says no woman should have to bear a child which is the result of rape or incest.

Unless SB 23 includes provisions for rape and incest, and unless it takes into account the health of the mother, and unless women and their doctors have a reasonable time to make this difficult decision — it is not a wise law, but rather a law that says women should have no agency over their own bodies, which is just plain wrong.

Senate Bill 23 is not about life or love. It is not about compassion for the unborn. It is a punitive measure that seeks to enforce a fundamentalist, sexist religious agenda on the women of Ohio and, as such, it must be defeated.