



Jaime Miracle
Deputy Director
HB 90 Opponent Testimony
House Health Committee
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Chairman Merrin, Ranking Member Boyd, and members of the House Health Committee, my name is Jaime Miracle and I am the Deputy Director of NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio. I am here to testify on behalf of our more than 50,000 members and activists against HB 90.

To be clear, NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio believes that students should have access to comprehensive, unbiased, and factually accurate information in schools. Unfortunately, Ohio is the only state in the nation that does not have health education standards. Rather than debating legislation that seeks to impose biased, politically-motivated standards, lawmakers should be working to implement a fact-based curriculum that could empower individuals to make informed decisions about their own health and well-being.

While several other opponents of this bill will address the dangers posed by the so-called “educational standards” it would impose, I will focus instead on the portion of the bill that stipulates that the Ohio Department of Health will create a “pregnancy and child services database” for the purpose of providing “information about the humanity of an unborn child and achieving an abortion-free society.” I will also address the stipulation that businesses across the state would be required to post politically-motivated, biased information that may contradict their own deeply held beliefs.

Currently, Ohio is facing a maternal health crisis, with mothers dying at alarming rates following childbirth. Accordingly, it is essential that our students be educated about women’s health during pregnancy, and that our citizens have access to the information they need to make informed decisions about pregnancy, and the services available to help ensure a healthy and safe pregnancy and delivery. Instead, this bill attests to the continued obsession with abortion exhibited by the majority party of the Ohio Legislature, at the expense of women’s health and rights.

As Ranking Member Boyd eloquently stated again and again during the recent hearings on SB 23, you cannot have a healthy pregnancy without a healthy woman. How unfortunate then that HB 90’s focus is not on the health of the woman at all, but strictly on the fetus. Section 3708.05 of the bill clearly illustrates this point, by stipulating that ODH must include this statement in its new database: “There are many public and private agencies willing and able to help you carry your *child* to term and assist you and your *child* after your *child* is born, whether you choose to keep your *child* or place your *child* for adoption [emphasis added].” Nowhere does the bill reference the many agencies that may help *the woman* have a healthy pregnancy, or escape domestic abuse, or have assistance with childbirth and postpartum care.

This misplaced emphasis is evident also in section 3708.15 of the bill, which states that the “department of health shall distribute educational and informational materials addressing maternal behavior during pregnancy *that is helpful to an unborn child* [emphasis added].” Would it not be more advantageous to provide information on how to remain healthy throughout pregnancy, since surely those things that are helpful to a person during pregnancy, are also helpful to the fetus developing in their uterus?

Once ODH creates this “resource directory” HB 90 requires “facilities” to display signs created by ODH that direct individuals to the aforementioned poorly-resourced database, and provide

inaccurate information about fetal development and abortion in each restroom. HB 90 defines “facilities” as all retail food establishments, health care institutions, and educational settings (which is defined so broadly that it basically could include every building in the state).

While lawmakers might argue that the state can regulate information displayed in the restrooms of public buildings, but forcing private businesses to post signs like proscribed in HB 90 when the business owner may have deeply held beliefs in opposition to the content of the signs is a governmental overreach that cannot be tolerated.

How can legislators—particularly those who are so quick to cry ‘government overreach’ whenever regulations are proposed with which they disagree—justify requiring a business to put up a sign espousing an anti-abortion viewpoint when the owner may have a deeply held conviction that access to abortion is a fundamental human right? Can it be that government regulation is only bad when Republicans don’t agree with it, but is ‘good governance’ when the issue is one with which Republicans agree?

HB 90 is bad legislation. It is poorly conceived and executed, and dangerous for the health and well-being of Ohio’s citizens. I urge this committee to cease hearings on this bill and focus instead on enacting policies that actually improve health outcomes for Ohioans.