



Brittany Rojas

House Bill No. 297

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Chairman Merrin, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Rogers and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to submit testimony regarding House Bill 297. As a current participant in the parenting classes offered at Pregnancy Decision Health Centers (PDHC) in Columbus, Ohio, I'm here to be a representative for the women who are given the opportunity to use this center as a resource for before, during, and after their pregnancy journeys. I am here as an advocate for my fellow classmates and for the work that is done at the center. I learned about PDHC through a friend of mine. She told me about the resources and support they offer to expectant and current mothers. When I went to the center to gather more information and sign up for the parenting classes, I learned about their early pregnancy intervention services, education, and resources for those who are most at-risk for adverse medical and social outcomes. As a recent returned Peace Corps Volunteer, serving in Ecuador under the Secondary English Education program, I was thrilled that there was an organization that would be able to help prepare me for the arrival of my child. While I was a volunteer with the Peace Corps, I was able to witness first-hand the health systems in developing countries. The limited programs, or lack thereof, for women's health was a strain felt by even a visiting service volunteer such as myself. This is a reason why I value PDHC so much, and why I'm so thankful for the opportunity to be a part of it: because I've seen firsthand what services to the community and public health can do to improve outcomes and change lives world over.

I felt a sense of relief learning that the center is a no-cost provider, as I have been unable to obtain a job due to how far along my pregnancy was upon my arrival back to the States. In attending the weekly classes I have been able to get myself prepared and obtain more knowledge about how to have a safe

and healthy pregnancy, how to properly care for my child as she grows. With classes such as Safe Sleep, Healthy Decisions-Nutrition and Financial Planning, I feel much more secure and comfortable heading into this next chapter of my life. I feel prepared as not only a better mother for my child, but also as a better person for myself. This organization has also been able to open up a sense of community to myself and fellow classmates who may be going through the same temporary economic and social struggles. Having women in my class from various ages, cultures, and life experiences, we are able to rally with one another for any additional support we may need.

In my eyes, to have an organization as resourceful and knowledgeable as PDHC in the Columbus area is outstanding for people who may need extra help and support. Having a staff that is present, humble, and communicative allowed me to feel confident in speaking to them about my current pregnancy journey and being able to rely on their support. PDHC has been able to help me in regards to the educational classes they provide and the baby/mommy “necessities” that are offered like pregnancy clothing, baby clothing, and other items a baby would need for their first year of life. This support alone has helped me tremendously financially and helped set me on the right path for motherhood. Most importantly, this has helped my child in more ways than she will know...and she’s not even born yet!

Chairman Merrin, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Rogers and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to share how PDHC has supported me thus far in my pregnancy journey and for women and their families who also benefit from this organization. Thank you for your public service and continued commitment to providing care for present and future pregnant women, infants and families. I respectfully ask you to support House Bill 297.