

Proponent Testimony regarding Senate Bill 27

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Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee

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Thank you Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking member Antonio, and members of the Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee for the opportunity to speak on behalf of Senate Bill 27 which addresses disposition of fetal remains from surgical abortion.

My name is Margie Christie and I am the President of the Right to Life Action Coalition of Ohio. We represent right to life organizations in Dayton, Toledo, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and several others. These four metropolitan areas however, are ground zero for the majority of surgical abortions in Ohio. The sheer volume of fetal remains from the facilities in our areas in any given year is several thousand. Under current law, the remains of these thousands of children could end up in our area landfills and/or trash.

I would like to point out to the committee that since death is universal experience of all human beings, practically every culture on earth has a system, ritual, and/or set of rules regarding the disposal of the dead. In a lot of these cases, the way in which we dispose of the dead is our desire to show respect. But even if that is lacking, society understand the common sense health safeguards that most go along with a proper burial. Most governments, if not all, have recognized the public's interest in the safety and welfare of the proper disposal of human remains.

That is all this legislation is doing. This legislation is not restricting abortion because it is regulating the act itself, therefore it by no means burdens the woman's choice. What it does do, is provide informed consent on what that woman may want to do with the remains.

I am also the executive director of Dayton Right to Life. 33 years ago this month, in March 1986, Dayton Right to Life was given the remains of a 14-16 week female aborted baby (as identified by the Montgomery County coroner) that found in a dumpster at the Women's Med Center. We, along with other pro-life organizations and churches held a memorial service for this child and buried the remains at Woodland Cemetery.

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Four hundred people attended that burial service. I share this story because we as a society recognize on a daily basis, that the dead should have a respectful resting place.

How many of us have had a backyard ceremony for our beloved family pet? How much more then, should a baby deserve, regardless of the way in which he or she died.

On behalf of the members of The Right to Life Action Coalition of Ohio, we respectfully ask this committee to pass Senate Bill 27 and ensure that Ohio properly disposes of fetal remains in a manner standard to burial customs and safeguards of our public health and safety.

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