

Chairperson Burke, Ranking Member Antonio, Members of the Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee,

Thank you for the time to speak today. My name is Al Debelak. I presently serve as an Interim Lutheran Pastor here in Columbus - I serve as a volunteer escort at the Planned Parenthood Clinic on the Eastside of Columbus - I sit on the Board of NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio. I am here to speak against SB 155.

Let me begin by saying that deception is a masterful art. I've seen its mastery on stages and street corners and even by a grandfather whose ability to pull a quarter out of his granddaughter's ear is met with a sense of awe - as though gramps has abilities beyond the scope of ordinary humans. I loved it when I could pull off that deception when my granddaughter was younger.

Deception can be beneficial when in the twinkling of an eye - a child can be moved out of harm's way - a flu shot is administered before the needle is even seen - the beloved cat can be caged and taken to the vet for the last time while the cat-lover entertains a kitten or is handed a new toy or a favorite food.

I suppose I'm trying to say that there is a time and a place in which deception plays a part within the creativity of our humanity. But as those times pass, the mature, grounded, respectful, and honest aims of our humanity leans into truth-telling - not deception.

I am blessed to have time with women who are simply walking to or from their cars as they come and go at the Planned Parenthood clinic. The only hint of deception at that clinic was when there was a miscommunication about when the doors would open. She was not happy - she felt violated. And yet, within moments of a truthful conversation about when the doors would open and the time taken to listen to a bit of her sharing, the notion of deception passed. In fact, she said she had gone to several "women's care centers" that appeared to provide healthcare only to find she was - at those places - in the hands of serial deceivers. She deserved better.

As I look at Senate Bill 155 I think of that woman I met who would not tolerate deception of any kind when it comes to receiving truthful, honest and evidence-based healthcare. Medical abortion involves the use of two medications that have been found to be an effective and safe way to end a pregnancy. SB 155 appears to use the mastery of deception to create another kind of science (which is no real science at all) that does not meet the standards of medical testing that we have come to expect whenever medical procedures have been tested and approved to be used by medical professionals.

I find that it is an act of violence to blatantly deceive patients with inaccurate information that attempts to push practices that do nothing to promote women's health. I find it to be an act of deeper violence when those who are trusted to make laws for the welfare of all use the tactics of deception to codify misinformation at the expense of women. I find it to

be another level of violence when the deception lifted up in SB 155 demeans the integrity of a woman's decision-making-process which I have found to be consistently thorough and multi-layered. SB 155 also goes after physicians who, working within the realm of clinically proven methods of medical care and a deeply held oath to the well-being of their patients, will be subject to a misdemeanor or a felony if they refuse to abide by a deception worked up in these hallowed political halls rather than abide by the private and compassionate care relationship between a doctor and patient.

I would ask you not to spend more of our state's time and finances developing the mastery of another inaccurate and harmful deception when women like my wife, my daughter, my granddaughter, the women and girls in our church deserve to receive the best care their medical professionals can offer. I urge you to vote against SB 155

Thank you for your service and time.