

Written & In-Person Proponent Testimony provided to the Ohio House Health Committee on 11/29/2017 in favor of HB-258, the Heartbeat Bill

November 29, 2017

Mr. Chairman & members of the House Health Committee:

My name is Lori Viars & I'm from Lebanon, Ohio. I'm Vice President of Warren County Right To Life & I'm here to encourage passage of HB-258, a life-saving proposal known as the "Heartbeat Bill." In a nutshell, *"If a heartbeat is detected, the baby is protected."*

This bill has **wide support**. Respected pollster George Barna of The Barna Group did a 2017 poll of 1,002 adults. The poll asked if respondents agreed or disagreed with this simple statement:

"If a doctor is able to detect the heartbeat of an unborn baby, that baby should be legally protected."

The results were stunningly pro-life: **69%** of Americans said they agreed with the Heartbeat Bill; **13%** neither agreed nor disagreed; and **only 18% of Americans disagreed with the Heartbeat Bill.** Those numbers show broad support that cuts across all party affiliations.

Breaking it down by party, **86%** of Republicans agreed with the Heartbeat Bill; **8%** neither agreed nor disagreed; and **only 6% of Republicans disagreed with the Heartbeat Bill.**

Among Democrats, **55% agreed with the Heartbeat Bill; 20% neither agreed nor disagreed; and only 25% of Democrats disagreed with the Heartbeat Bill.**

The Heartbeat Bill is **pro-science**. Renowned legal scholar, Dr. David Forte, was one of the primary drafters of this bill. Professor Forte says that the Heartbeat Bill simply gives the courts a more accurate yardstick than what they currently use (viability). A detectable heartbeat is a more scientifically accurate measurement than viability, so the Heartbeat Bill is pro-science.

The Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals agreed that a heartbeat is a better marker than viability. The Eighth Circuit Appellate Court called detectable heartbeat **"a more consistent and certain marker than viability."**

The Heartbeat Bill is **compassionate**. Right now in Ohio, it is perfectly legal to abort an 18 or 19 week unborn baby who can suck his or her thumb, kick, and even jump inside the womb. I personally felt my own two children kicking at 19 weeks and 17 weeks---and I felt it when they had the hiccups! Can we not find some compassion for these vulnerable "preemies"?

I myself---and probably many of you in this room---were unplanned pregnancies. Shouldn't we offer the same opportunity to other unborn humans as we've been given? It's as simple as the Golden Rule. Doesn't everyone deserve to live? Doesn't everyone deserve a birthday?

Thank you.

Respectfully,
Lori Viars