

Testimony Submitted by Dr. Margaret Stager

Director, Division of Adolescent Health, MetroHealth Medical Center

Re: HB 258

I am the Director of the Division of Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine at MetroHealth Medical Center, Cleveland, Ohio. In the last 24 years I have seen a lot of hardships and heartbreak over the years; in particular, the devastating impact of teen pregnancy. Statistics show that the teen mother and baby suffer major consequences affecting their health, their education, their economic status and their futures. Yet, teen pregnancy is at an all-time low in the United States in part due to long acting contraception as well as improved access to reproductive health services.

HB 259 prohibits abortion after 6 weeks which is when many pregnancies are first detected. The proposed legislation would completely eliminate a woman's opportunity to consider pregnancy termination as an option. Specifically, if a pregnancy is diagnosed at 6 weeks or later, HB 259 would pre-determine that abortion is not an option for her circumstance. It is important to state the obvious here: Abortion remains legal in this country. The women in Ohio are allowed to determine their futures by making sound decisions without any interference from government.

Politics don't belong in the exam room. The personal decision-making about a pregnancy belongs in the private realm of the doctor-patient relationship. HB 259 would be in direct violation of a woman's right to access abortion care services and of great consequence to her economic future. I urge you to vote no on HB 259 and show your support for women's right to choose and to determine her family planning.