

Greetings

My name is Alana Belle. I am the Community Organizer for New Voices Cleveland and an Ohio resident.

New Voices Cleveland is a branch of New Voices for Reproductive Justice - a reproductive justice organization that is dedicated to the complete health and wellbeing of Black women and girls. We believe that Black women are capable of making the reproductive decisions that are best for themselves and their families; the state legislature should not impede on that decision-making process by limiting access to safe family planning options. **For those reasons, New Voices for Reproductive Justice strongly opposes HB 258.**

As an organization, it is our goal to help people experience reproductive freedom - a state in which a person has total control over when and how they have a child, when and how they do not have a child, and when they have the ability to parent their child/ren in world free from violence. House Bill 258 is in direct conflict with reproductive freedom as it eliminates abortion as a safe family planning option. The 6 Week Abortion Ban is not an issue of rights - federal law ensures that a person has the right to obtain an abortion and any legislation that serves to undermine Roe v. Wade is unconstitutional. Bills similar to HB 258 have already been labeled as such in various states.

The 6 Week Abortion Ban is thought to be an issue of morality, with the sponsors of this bill believing they are the protagonists of the story. Their haphazard attempt at linking adoption services to those seeking an abortion speaks to their desire not to prevent unwanted pregnancies but to control what women do with their bodies; there is no mention of medically accurate, comprehensive sex education nor is there mention of making birth control more accessible. While we find adoption to be a fantastic family planning option for those who choose that route, it is no longer a commendable alternative when abortion is inaccessible...it is forcing women to endure the physical and emotional labor of carrying out a full term pregnancy, if possible, taking that child and placing them in the foster care system with hopes that they'll be adopted by a safe, loving family.

Because it is coercing people into choosing adoption, HB 258 does not speak to those who have grown up in the adoption/foster care system and survived physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse at the hands of foster families. Because there is no provision for allowing termination of pregnancy in cases of rape or incest, HB 258 does not speak to those who conceived through abuse. Because the bill is void of geographic and cultural competencies, HB 258 does not speak to those who live in areas riddled with lead and know the challenges of an infant mortality rate 4 times the national average (like the Hough neighborhood in Cleveland). Because it does not allow women to be in control of their bodies or their futures, HB 258 does not seek to benefit women or their families. Who does this bill benefit aside from anti-choice legislators? Because we know the

turmoil to come if it is passed, we hope that the committee sides with the people and votes "no" on HB 258.

I am happy to answer any questions the committee and/or Chair may have. I can be reached by telephone or email.

Sincerely,
Alana Belle

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