**Testimony of Pastor Johnathan Newman**

**Senate Health Committee – 12/4/18 – Proponent of HB-258, the Heartbeat Bill**

Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Beagle, ranking member Tavares, thank you for hearing my testimony today in support of HB-258. Thank you for serving the great communities of Ohio. Our churches pray for you all often.

I am Johnathan Newman, Pastor at Koinos Church in Troy, Miami County. Our church is part of the Southern Baptist Convention’s 700+ churches in Ohio. My church is unified in agreement across our denomination’s 40,000 churches nationwide. We share the deep conviction to protect all human life from conception to natural death. We value all human life, those born, unborn, the outcasts and elderly.

The Bible states in Genesis 1:26, “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.’” Where there is a human heartbeat, there is a human being created in the image of God. He commanded in The Gospel of Mark 12:31, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater.” The unborn are our neighbors whom we must protect at all cost.

The generations of slavery were an evil, dark blot on our nation. Many Americans wrongfully believed that an African with black skin was not a human being. They were treated as sub-human creatures. But thanks be to God that our culture has rejected that evil, dark blot. But abortion is the same evil, dark blot, where human beings are called non-humans, treated as objects to be discarded.

*Save The Storks* is a non-profit organization providing free ultrasounds to expecting moms in crisis pregnancies who might choose to abort their babies. Statistics found on their website, tell us that 4 out of 5 moms who see the ultrasound of their baby choose not to abort. This is profound. When a person realizes it is not a blob of meaningless cells but a living, human baby they instinctively know it is a life they cannot choose to end. To take the life of another human is a non-human act. To protect a human life is truly human.

*The Barna Research Group* surveyed Americans across all political affiliations, asking this question:

If a doctor is able to detect the heartbeat of an unborn baby should that baby be legally protected? Americans from every political affiliation answered – yes – in an overwhelming majority. Again, people from all political affiliations answered yes in an overwhelming majority. The highest group answered affirmingly 86% of the time and the lowest group 55%.

Christians believe the Bible concerning the beginning and protection of human life so it is not surprising that we call strongly for the protection of every unborn baby. But non-Christians do as well. They do so because not only does the Bible give us this conviction. Being human gives us this conviction.

So I ask the committee to bring The Heartbeat Bill to the floor for a vote as soon as possible and pass it with the strongest vote possible.

Thank you!