

WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: 4/30/19

Name: Barry Sheets

Are you representing: Yourself _____ Organization

Organization (If Applicable): Right to Life Action Coalition of Ohio

Position/Title: Legislative Consultant

Address: PO Box 128

City: Columbus State: OHIO Zip: 43231

Best Contact Telephone: 614-969-5293 Email: consult@principledconsult.com

Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes No _____

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): SB 217

Specific Issue: Disposition of Fetal Remains

Are you testifying as a: Proponent Opponent _____ Interested Party _____

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes No _____

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? 3 minutes

Please provide a brief statement on your position:

Support the legislation

Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this committee are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online.

Senate Bill 27 Proponent Testimony
Barry Sheets, Legislative Consultant, Right to Life Action Coalition of Ohio
House Civil Justice Committee
April 30th, 2019

Thank you, Chairman Hambley, vice chairman Patton, ranking member Brown and members of the committee for allowing me to testify before you today on an important piece of legislation.

The Right to Life Action Coalition of Ohio (RTLACO) is a network of organizations who stand together to uphold protections for defenseless unborn life. Member organizations include Right to Life of Greater Cincinnati, Toledo Right to Life, Dayton Right to Life, Cleveland Right to Life, as well as numerous other local and regional organizations. We are pleased to see this bill being heard today.

When a series of YouTube-posted videos from the organization Center for Medical Progress exposed the potentially illegal practice of harvesting body parts from aborted babies for profit by numerous affiliates of Planned Parenthood, an investigation was undertaken by the Charitable Law section of then-Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine's office on whether or not Ohio facilities were involved.

In a summary of the investigation report, his office reported something which raises significant concern. It stated: "It became readily apparent following the receipt of the Planned Parenthood responses that there was no means by which the team could account for the fetuses comprising those totals...the investigation would have undoubtedly benefited from a legal requirement mandating that providers of abortion services document the disposition of each and every fetus taken as a result of an abortion procedure. Absent such a requirement, the team was unable to conclude with certainty that no

Planned Parenthood organization engages in transaction of fetuses or fetal tissue.”

Senator Joe Uecker has been a legislative leader on addressing this issue of concern. The bill you have before you today, Senate Bill 27, would create a documentation requirement for the remains of each and every aborted child, and also require that the remains be humanely disposed, whether through interment in burial plot or crypt, or by individual cremation by a licensed crematorium operator.

The pregnant woman would, during the informed consent period prior to an abortion, be given information regarding the right to choose the method of disposition, or to not choose and the requirement would fall on the abortion provider to complete.

Documentation which can be used both by the Ohio Department of Health to accurately tally the actual number of abortions performed, and also by a funeral director or crematoria as a legal transfer certificate for the remains of the deceased, is provided for in the bill.

In the case of an abortion which results in the death of multiple unborn children (such as when the pregnant woman would be carrying multiples), SB 27 would require a separate form for each.

Our coalition has worked closely with Senator Uecker and his staff on the development of the bill before you today, and believe that this legislation will give the clarity that has been noted as lacking in our statutes by our state’s Attorney General. Trafficking in body parts is illegal, but without the accountability established by the language of Senate Bill 27, Ohio may not be assured that these organizations are operating lawfully and transparently. Given that the US Department

of Justice launched an investigation into the matter, it is indeed time for the common sense provisions of SB 27 to be added to our statutes. We would respectfully ask for this committee's support and favorable passage of this legislation.

Thank you again for permitting me to address you today. I would be happy to take questions should the committee require.
