



Dayton
Right to
Life

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Chairman Hambley, Vice Chairman Patton, Ranking Member Brown and Committee members,

My name is Margie Christie and I am the Executive Director of Dayton Right to Life and past president of the Right to Life Action Coalition of Ohio. I am here today to respectfully ask for your support of the AM SB 27 regarding the disposition of fetal remains in Ohio. This is my third opportunity to voice the support of thousands of Ohioans who want to see the respectful disposition of fetal remains enacted in our State.

As I have testified before, I have also heard the opposition's talking points and would like to address some of those today. On March 26, 2019 the Executive Director of Preterm abortion provider in Northeast Ohio, offered the following testimony before the Senate Health and Human Services Committee, "Abortion Providers like Preterm already handle embryonic and fetal tissue in accordance with state law to ensure that it is safe and appropriately handled." This is clearly misleading. Abortion providers do not want to acknowledge the difference between fetal tissue and fetal remains. I have contacted over 25 hospitals across Ohio from Licking Memorial, Coshocton Hospital, 2 Cincinnati area hospitals including TriHealth, to one of the largest hospital groups, OhioHealth group here in central Ohio. All of these hospitals have disposition policies for children who die before or after birth at their facilities. All of them consult the family about final disposition of the remains. They offer cremations and/or burials as their options. As true providers of women's health, hospitals understand the difficulty of this decision by a family at the time of their loss, but do not consider it a conversation to be avoided or, by any means, an economic hardship. They understand that the remains of an unborn child are not tissue or something to be classified as infectious waste to be incinerated or auto-claved and later dumped in a landfill. As a society, we recognized human remains are deserving of respect and dignity. In fact, we have other laws regarding the abuse of a corpse etc. Hospitals acknowledge this norm and have dignified disposition policies in place. Why wouldn't facilities like PreTerm and Women Med in Dayton follow the same protocols and standards as other healthcare providers? Fetal remains are not infectious waste.

A second point I would like to make is that all of the hospitals I spoke with had burial and cremation service providers that they could recommend to their families, regardless of whether they could afford such services. Ohio Health had various funeral homes in Central Ohio that offered such services at a reduced rate or free of charge. Ohio Health and others also offered grief counseling services as well. Dayton Right to Life in 1986 and in 1997 accepted the remains of aborted children for burial. One such child, baby Fran, was found in the local abortion provider's dumpster. As a society, we can all agree that human remains do not belong in the trash. Dayton Right to Life maintains these gravesites and would accept other aborted remains in the future should we be contacted.

Lastly, opponents to this legislation typically offer a litany of pro-abortion talking points, but offer few legal arguments. This is because disposition laws are already in place in several states and have been for years. In 2019, The United States Supreme Court upheld Indiana's fetal remains law in *Box vs. Planned Parenthood* stating, "This Court has already acknowledged that a State has a "legitimate interest in proper disposal of fetal remains." " Justice Thomas added, " I would have thought it could go without saying that nothing in the Constitution or any decision of this Court prevents a State from requiring abortion facilities to provide the respectful treatment of human remains."

Committee members-The bottom line is that this legislation is solid and within the rights of the citizens of Ohio to implement. Abortion providers should follow the same standards as hospitals if they want to be considered as healthcare providers. This legislation ensures that the remains of all children who die in Ohio, before or after birth, are given the proper disposition that other Ohio citizens receive. Therefore, on behalf of thousands of Ohioans, we ask for your support of AMS SB27.