



Mollie and Nathan Verdier  
Senate Bill 27  
House Civil Justice Committee  
December 3, 2020

Chairman Hambley, Vice-chair Patton, Ranking Member Brown and members of the committee, thank you for allowing us to testify on SB 27. Hello, we are Nathan and Mollie Verdier, founders of Morgan's Place Cemetery in Sidney, Oh, which is a non-profit Cemetery for the burial of babies who die before birth. We have not yet interred a baby on the grounds, however we anticipate breaking ground in the Spring of 2021. We are a registered 501(c) (3) company. Morgan's Place Cemetery will be on a 2.5 acre tract of land that will have the capacity to bury 4200 miscarried, stillborn or aborted babies individually in their own plots. All necessary plans are in place, and all necessary documents have been approved by our township.

My wife Mollie and I donated a portion of our 80 acre farm to the charity after the loss of our baby Morgan and our triplet Marion and will make available additional acres as needed to serve our ministry to the unborn and their families. We have partnered with funeral homes in Shelby County; Darke, Logan, Miami, Montgomery , Champaign, Auglaize and Mercer counties that will offer their services, including cremation, to those families free of charge. At Morgan's Place we will also offer free burials, and grave markers at no charge. I mention this to the committee because I have read over opponent testimony that has mentioned numerous times the extreme cost that will be placed on the patient or business to adhere to the regulations in this bill. However, that is a moot point because of the existence of Morgan's Place and many generous people willing to serve others. Many funeral homes are filled with compassionate people who respect all human life and nearly every funeral home I spoke with in an 8 county reach was willing to

assist with the cremation of miscarried babies that had passed away, for free or for a reduced cost. I'm confident such cooperation can be found in every county in the state.

With that being said, I would like to make it clear that Morgan's Place Cemetery is a ministry that respects the life of every human being, before and after birth; and we pray to see abortion become illegal here in Ohio and throughout the entire world. As long as abortion remains legal, however, requiring the humane burial or cremation of children who die during the embryonic or fetal stages of development is a necessity. Our calling through Morgan's Place is to provide burials to children who die in the womb, no matter the circumstance. Currently, babies very similar to the two we lost, and even those much older are improperly disposed as medical waste or in a landfill, but at Morgan's Place Cemetery, we offer dignified burial without obstacles.

What we also can offer, by way of this bill, is being a place of healing. I recently attended a conference for Abortion Recovery Leaders, where I was surrounded by post-abortive mothers who have experienced various degrees of healing from their abortion experiences and are now involved in ministries to help others. Many of these mothers discussed not being fully informed at the time of their abortion, and how difficult it has been to overcome the guilt that comes with realizing that it was in fact a baby they were carrying and ultimately aborted. One woman in particular shared with me that what haunts her most is not knowing where her baby was taken, wondering if he or she was sold for parts, or in a landfill, and that she would have loved to know where her baby was, so she could go visit and find healing. In SB 27 it states that an abortion clinic would need to provide a report that will include a patient number, the name of the abortion clinic and a date of the abortion. This data is seen by the opponents of SB 27 as unneeded and burdensome to the healthcare facilities. However this information could be a silent beacon of healing for a post abortive parent later seeking to find their baby's remains if SB 27 is passed. Morgan's Place is working with a gravesite mapping company who is willing to integrate data such as this into our program, so abortive parents could someday locate the resting place of their baby on the grounds of Morgan's Place remotely from anywhere in the country, visit the grounds, and even possibly provide a name plate for their baby. What a healing process this could be! Opponents of this bill claim abortion providers and abortive

parents may be harassed by others, but they fail to acknowledge the internal dialogue that parents have with themselves and the many mental health struggles of those who have had an abortion or assisted with abortions.

For us, at Morgan's Place, every life has value, no matter the size or gestational age. Regardless of one's view of abortion legality, there is no denying the negative impact abortion has on mothers and fathers through that loss of their child. No abortion is a safe abortion, but for a family to have the option of burial at Morgan's Place, a family can hopefully have a chance to heal by visiting the resting place of their baby. I understand that opponents say that the patient already has the right to have their baby buried, but in times of distress, one's emotions and heart need time to catch up with the ability to think logically and rationally. And unfortunately, we know from experience how difficult it is to obtain the bodies even of miscarried children in a hospital. The bodies are habitually whisked away without a care for the dignity of these tiny human persons.

What is callously discarded after abortions are human remains and we can't pretend otherwise for the convenience of the abortion clinic workers. As our family has experienced with the loss of two of our children during pregnancy, there is heavy regulation of burial of human remains, both for the dignity of the human person and as a sanitary measure. Yet such care is completely overlooked in regard to aborted fetal remains.

Will this bill ultimately make mothers and health care workers realize that what they are burying is a baby? I hope so, because that is what it is. All of the scientific criteria of human life are present from the moment of conception. Is SB 27 the answer to all pro-life advocates' efforts? No, but abortion is ugly and we are meeting it where it is at in Ohio, and we are doing what we feel we can to respect the short yet significant lives of these babies. I can't express how sad it is that in our state, we have to fight just to give dignified burials to a baby, when all of our efforts should really be focused on how to keep these babies alive and helping and supporting their parents.

Thank you again for permitting us to address you today. We respectfully ask for the committee's support and favorable passage of this bill, so all babies can have

a dignified burial. We would be happy to take any questions that the committee may have.