

Meg DeBlase
Executive Director, Right to Life of Greater Cincinnati &
Legislative Committee Chair, Right to Life Action Coalition of Ohio
Proponent Testimony
S.B. 27, Humane Disposition of Fetal Remains Act
December 3, 2020

Chairman Hambley, Vice Chair Patton, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the Ohio House Civil Justice Committee:

My name is Meg DeBlase, and I am the Executive Director of Cincinnati Right to Life – a decades old organization founded by pro-life warriors Jack and Barbara Willke. Cincinnati Right to Life is part of the Right to Life Action Coalition which is a statewide network of organizations who stand together to uphold protections for defenseless unborn life. Today, I represent and speak for tens of thousands of Ohioans who believe that all life, born and unborn, is precious and worthy of protection. Today, I represent them in expressing my support for Senate Bill 27.

Senate Bill 27 – The Humane Disposition of Fetal Remains Act requires the burial or cremation of each individual surgically aborted child, and gives a mother the choice of method of final disposition. It ensures that a paper trail follows an aborted child's fetal remains from the abortionist, to the funeral home or crematory, and then to the Ohio Department of Health.

This bill was prompted after then Attorney General (now Governor) Mike DeWine's investigation into whether state abortion facilities were properly disposing of aborted babies' remains, due to evidence of improper procedures found in other states. His investigation uncovered that abortionists are ignoring Ohio code which already requires the humane disposal of these babies' bodies. Abortionists in Ohio were found to be callously dumping aborted babies in landfills.

In the state of Ohio, a woman can legally have an abortion up to 20 weeks post fertilization and anytime after that in cases of life endangerment or severely compromised health. At 20 weeks, a woman is halfway through her pregnancy. According to the Mayo Clinic, at this point the mother can feel the baby's movements inside of her, and the baby is about 6 1/3 inches long from crown to rump. The baby is well developed with all organs present. Now, imagine after having killed a baby like this, the abortionist tosses it in a garbage can or throws it in a dumpster – treating this whole, human, dead baby like a piece of garbage.

There were over 20,000 unborn babies legally killed in Ohio in 2019. What happened to those 20,000 bodies? We truly don't know and that is why we believe in the importance of this regulation.

On May 28, 2019, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled in favor of a similar law regarding the disposition of fetal remains in our neighboring state of Indiana. The Court stated that in previous rulings, they have already acknowledged that a State has a "legitimate interest in proper disposal of fetal remains." (*Akron v. Akron Center for Reproductive Health, Inc.*, 462 U. S. 416, 452, n. 45 (1983).) We can safely assume the same applies in our own state of Ohio. Current Ohio law requires humane disposition of fetal remains, but it is vague and open

to interpretation. Senate Bill 27, however, provides specific guidelines to clearly ensure proper treatment of these babies' bodies. It ensures that their bodies are not mistreated as "medical waste," nor harvested and sold for research.

The real tragedy here is that it is legal to kill this vulnerable child. Despite valiant efforts by many, we've not been able to save all babies from abortion yet. In the meantime, at the very least, we can give little aborted children some measure of respect and dignity in final disposition— the same as for any other deceased human being.

Please vote for S.B. 27, to move this measure into law.