

Representative Fred Strahorn
House Insurance Committee
Sponsor Testimony on H.B. 451

I want to thank Chairman Brinkman, Vice-Chairman Antani, and Ranking Member Boggs for allowing me to give sponsor testimony on H.B. 451.

H.B. 451 is designed to bring awareness and some relief to the terrible condition known as endometriosis.

Endometriosis is not a commonly understood condition and is often a painful disorder, in which tissue similar to the tissue that normally lines the inside of a woman's uterus—the endometrium—grows outside of the uterus or womb where it doesn't belong. Some of the symptoms are pain, painful sexual intercourse, cramping during intercourse, infertility, pain during pelvic examinations, lower abdominal pain, diarrhea and/or constipation, lower back pain, chronic fatigue, irregular/heavy menstruation, and bloody urine. In some rare cases, patients experience chest pain or coughing blood due to endometriosis in the lungs; headache and/or seizures due to endometriosis in the brain.

Endometriosis can be associated with severe pain and fertility problems. About 30-40% of women with endometriosis have some trouble conceiving a child. Over time, endometrial implants may grow, or cysts may result because of endometriosis, which also may cause fertility problems.

Endometriosis affects 1 out of 10 American women. Currently, endometriosis is a chronic condition with no cure. However, effective treatments are available to manage pain and fertility issues, such as medications (i.e. lupron), hormone therapy (i.e. progesterone) and surgery (i.e. **excision**, the more thorough procedure but extremely expensive; **laparoscopy**, the more common procedure but less effective and usually leading to multiple surgeries).

This disease was brought to my attention by a friend of mine, Angelica Young. She is currently 30 years old, married and has suffered from endometriosis from the age of 12 (since she started her menstrual cycle) but it took her 14 years to get a diagnosis.

So, part of the problem is that many doctors are not that familiar with endometriosis or how to treat it (as is the case with less common diseases like chronic pain syndrome and sickle cell anemia).

Angelica first felt the impact of this disease at the age of twelve as she was hit with a sharp pain while preparing to leave for school. She was taken to Children's Hospital and diagnosed for a ruptured cyst. There was no discussion of endometriosis and this occurred several more times until at the age of approximately 23, her OBGYN told her she may have endometriosis.

In 2016, she had her first surgery at the age of 26 to address this problem, she had a second surgery 4 weeks after that and last year, at the age of 30, had her fifth surgery.

The laparoscopic surgeries have been to address severe pain that Angelica has experienced and has claimed her left ovary. She is under significant pressure to have surgery to remove her remaining ovary due to pain but has resisted because of her desire to still have a biological child through invitro fertilization.

H.B. 451 seeks to bring awareness to this difficult-to-diagnose disease. It will require the Ohio Department of Health to post on their website where to seek knowledgeable care. It will also require insurance companies to offer coverage for endometriosis.

Thanks again for your attention and I would be happy to answer any questions from the committee members.