

Chairman Dave Burke, Vice Chairman Steve Huffman, Ranking Member Nickie Antonio, Members of the Senate Health, Human Services & Medicaid Committee,

Thank you for taking the time to hear and read testimonies on Senate Bill 23. I appreciate you taking the time to hear from passionate citizens from all over our great state. While I'm sure you have heard and will hear many common themes throughout the testimonies, my hope is that this testimony will offer a unique perspective.

I have had the great honor of working at the Pregnancy Center of Greater Toledo since 2012. In that time the Pregnancy Center has served over 7,000 women and men, many of which have found themselves unexpectedly expecting. Since 2016 I have served the Center as the Executive Director, and out of all the amazing parts of my job, my favorite part is in the client room, walking along side of the incredible clients that we serve. I've heard many opposed to this bill share that women will be left without options. While the bill would remove the option of abortion after a heartbeat is detected, I can proudly tell you that women in Northwest Ohio, and throughout our state, will have options. Our board, staff, volunteers, community partners and donors are working tirelessly to ensure that these women have options.

We work closely with OBGYNs in our community to ensure that our clients get into care (with the doctor of their choice) early in their pregnancy. We do this by building relationships with our local OB offices, securing "backend" scheduling permission so that women don't leave with a phone number to call. They leave our office with their first prenatal appointment scheduled. We work closely with our local childcare providers to ensure that our clients have access to either free or low cost childcare. Our clients don't have to choose between their job/education and parenting their children; they have a choice. We advocate for our high school and college student clients to be able to continue their education and parent. We've worked with a local college to ensure a breastfeeding room on campus.

I could continue to provide example after example of ways that we are building collaborative partnerships in our community to ensure that women not only have options, but the best options. One thing that I have seen over the last six years is that women are courageous, brave and capable of incredible things, including mothering their children, when our communities stand with them. Myself, and the Pregnancy Center of Greater Toledo are committed to making sure that those that we serve have access to options that nurture life, build up our communities and empower families. Thank you.