



Ohio Section
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**Ohio Senate
Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee
SB23 Abortion Detectable Heartbeat
Testimony of Wayne Trout, MD
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Ohio Section**

Chair Burke, Vice Chair Beagle and Ranking Member Tavares, my name is Dr. Wayne Trout, I am an obstetrician-gynecologist, and I currently serve as Chair of the Ohio Section of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG Ohio). As you may know, *ACOG is the nationally recognized foremost organization dedicated to the improvement of women's health.* As such, ACOG, through its members, produce guidelines and education material viewed as the standard of care for patients. ACOG Ohio represents over 1500 Ohio OB/GYNs and their patients. I am grateful for this opportunity to provide written opponent testimony for SB23, "The Heartbeat Bill" and respectfully request your no vote.

ACOG recognizes that the abortion debate comes from profound moral conviction from all perspectives. While we respect the need of our members to determine their own personal values and beliefs, the organization's statement on abortion is clear (attached), *"Induced abortion is an essential component of women's health care. Like all medical matters, decisions regarding abortion should be made by patients in consultation with their health care providers and without undue interference by outside parties. Like all patients, women obtaining abortion are entitled to privacy, dignity, respect, and support."*

ACOG is committed to ensuring optimal women's health and is opposed to legislative proposals that limit women's access to medical care. ACOG supports women's access to all legal medical care, including family planning, contraception, and pregnancy outcome determinations.

It is critical for government to refrain from regulations that come between a patient and her physician. The provision of medical care must be a matter determined by the patient and her physician; interference in the physician-patient relationship should not be taken lightly. Medical situations are never one-size fits all; every woman's circumstance is unique, so her physician needs to be able to provide guidance that is relevant, appropriate and in their best medical judgment; *and the patient needs to be able to trust that her physician is providing appropriate counsel.*

Additionally, SB23 places physicians in a precarious situation by criminalizing a medical procedure recognized by ACOG as “standard of care” for women found to have medical indication for termination of pregnancy. By not providing the “standard of care,” physicians are vulnerable to civil litigation from patients; however, if they are to provide said care, they are open to criminal prosecution from the State. Ohio physicians should be able to practice medicine as their training and experience dictate; health care providers have a professional and ethical obligation to provide care that is evidence-based, safe, individualized, and medically-appropriate.

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Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on SB23. I appreciate your consideration, urge you to vote no on this bill, and I hope you will consider ACOG Ohio and myself a valuable resource for all items relating to the practice of obstetrics and gynecology and women’s health issues.



College Statement of Policy

As issued by the College Executive Board

ABORTION POLICY

The following statement is the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists' (ACOG) general policy related to abortion. The College's clinical guidelines related to abortion and additional information are contained in the relevant Practice Bulletins, Committee Opinions, and other College documents.

Induced abortion is an essential component of women's health care. Like all medical matters, decisions regarding abortion should be made by patients in consultation with their health care providers and without undue interference by outside parties. Like all patients, women obtaining abortion are entitled to privacy, dignity, respect, and support.

The College continues to affirm the legal right of a woman to obtain an abortion prior to fetal viability. ACOG is opposed to abortion of the healthy fetus that has attained viability in a healthy woman. Viability is the capacity of the fetus for sustained survival outside the woman's uterus. Whether or not this capacity exists is a medical determination, may vary with each pregnancy and is a matter for the judgment of the responsible health care provider.

While ACOG recognizes and respects that individuals may be personally opposed to abortion, health care providers should not seek to impose their personal beliefs upon their patients nor allow personal beliefs to compromise patient health, access to care, or informed consent.

Informed consent is an expression of respect for the patient as a person; it particularly respects a patient's moral right to bodily integrity, to self-determination regarding sexuality and reproductive capacities, and to the support of the patient's freedom within caring relationships.

A pregnant woman who may be ambivalent about her pregnancy should be fully informed in a balanced manner about all options, including raising the child herself, placing the child for adoption, and abortion. The information conveyed should be appropriate to the duration of the pregnancy. There is an ethical obligation to provide accurate information that is required for the patient to make a fully informed decision. The professional must avoid introducing personal bias.

Medical knowledge and patient care are not static. Innovations in medical practice are critical to the advancement of medicine and the improvement of health. Medical research is the foundation of evidence-based medicine and new research leads to improvements in care. ACOG is opposed to laws and regulations that operate to prevent advancements in medicine. For example, laws that prohibit health care providers from following current evidence-based protocols for medical abortion disregard scientific progress and prevent providers from offering patients the best available care. Likewise, the state and federal laws that prohibit specific surgical abortion procedures disrupt the evolution of surgical technique and prevent physicians from providing the

best or most appropriate care for some patients.

If abortion is to be performed, it should be performed safely and as early as possible. ACOG supports access to care for all individuals, irrespective of financial status, and supports the availability of all reproductive options. ACOG opposes unnecessary regulations that limit or delay access to care. The intervention of legislative bodies into medical decision making is inappropriate, ill advised, and dangerous.

ACOG opposes the harassment of abortion providers and patients.

ACOG strongly supports those activities which prevent unintended pregnancy.