 **Testimony of Elaina Ramsey
Executive Director of Ohio RCRC

*Senate HHSM Committee
February 26, 2019
 Senate Bill 23***

Chairman Burke, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee: My name is Elaina Ramsey, and I am here to testify as a “pro-faith, pro-family, pro-choice” Christian.

As the executive director of the Ohio Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, I stand with thousands of Ohioans in opposing Senate Bill 23. This bill does not reflect the values of the majority of Ohioans and Americans — including Protestants, Catholics, Jews, and other religious traditions — who support access to safe and legal abortion care.

This bill is fundamentally wrong and infringes on both religious and reproductive freedom. It makes no exceptions for rape or incest and denies pregnant people of their free will. It violates bodily autonomy and is an affront to rape survivors like myself.

No person should be forced to carry a pregnancy against their will — no matter the circumstance.

Given that 1 in 3 women will experience physical or sexual violence, this bill perpetuates rape culture and violates women’s moral agency. Rape survivors — or anyone for that matter — should not be forced to carry a pregnancy to term without their full consent.

Make no mistake: This bill is not about life or love.

There is nothing life-giving and loving about imposing your will on someone else’s body. There is nothing life-giving or loving about obsessively restricting abortion rights while ignoring the real needs of Ohioans. There is nothing life-giving or loving about criminalizing doctors and punishing women through this cruel, dangerous, and unconstitutional bill.

As a faithfully pro-choice Christian, I choose to advocate for policies and practices that support the well-being of pregnant people and families, such as affordable health care, paid family and medical leave, comprehensive sex education, birth control, and equal pay.

I choose to live out my faith with fear and trembling, seeking to dismantle systems of reproductive oppression which rob immigrants and refugees, LGBTQ folx, people of color, and other marginalized communities of their God-given dignity.

I choose to stand with the vast majority of Americans and people of faith (and non-faith) who are in favor of keeping abortion safe and legal.

I choose love. I choose life. Will you?

I urge you to vote against S.B. 23. May you draw upon your faith, conscience, and goodwill to oppose this extreme and immoral bill.

Thank you for your time, and I welcome your questions.