

**Bridgette Tupes**  
**Opponent Testimony**  
**Senate Bill 23**  
**Ohio Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee**  
**Wednesday, February 26, 2019**

Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio and Members of the Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee,

My name is Bridgette Tupes and I serve as the Board Chair of Planned Parenthood Advocates of Ohio. I come before you today not only in my role as an advocate for safe and legal abortion in Ohio, but as a patient of Planned Parenthood and a small business owner.

For every woman but especially as a small business owner whose financial security is incumbent upon that company, the decision of childbearing is a deeply difficult and personal one. It requires considerations for myself as well as those that impact my livelihood, as well as that of our employee and my partner. I utilize the services of Planned Parenthood to provide me with the necessary treatment to be able to time that decision to be able to provide the best life for my future children as well as my company. I trust that Planned Parenthood will keep me healthy and ensure that when the time is right I will be able to have children of my own.

The decision to terminate a pregnancy is also a deeply difficult and personal one. A decision that women should be left to make with those she depends on including her partner, family, doctor and faith leader. This bill drastically limits the timeline within which a woman can consider those decisions and her ability to make them with full information. Many times challenges that can be encountered regarding the health and safety of the mother as well as the fetus are unable to be determined at the early stages of development. These concerns can and should be reflected as a woman weighs whether or not to carry her pregnancy to term.

Senate Bill 23 is another attempt by this legislature to infringe upon that decision process of pregnant women. It is not only opposed by doctors and faith leaders but also has been found unconstitutional in other states. This bill is not about health or safety or protecting Ohio's families, it is about legislating personal decision making of women and tells women like me who make educated decisions about the timing of motherhood that they should not be trusted to make up their own minds.

I ask you to oppose this Senate Bill 23 and send a message to Ohio's women and families that they are trusted and empowered to make their own decisions.

Sincerely,  
Bridgette Tupes