

Jennifer Rayoum
Opponent Testimony
Senate Bill 23
Ohio Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee
Wednesday, February 26, 2019

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

Thank you for allowing me the time to testify today. My name is Jennifer Rayoum and I am a realtor, a mother, and a citizen. Today I am asking you to vote no on SB 23, which would effectively ban safe, legal abortion in Ohio by making it inaccessible.

I have enjoyed freedoms as a modern American woman that many women across this planet could only imagine. I have used those freedoms to make decisions for my life that have best suited my goals and dreams. I have done better than my parents and grandparents have. I graduated from college with a bachelor's degree (the first of my family), built a successful business in my hometown, employing others, and helping facilitate homeownership to many families every year. I also raised two incredible young people who are active and contributing young adults today.

Should these facts not give me the ability to choose to terminate an unwanted pregnancy if this pregnancy is unwanted or determined to be unhealthy? I realize the female body is the vessel men's children come through, but with that said, our male leaders have chosen to block daycare, nutrition, education, and medical funding. Who does the burden of an unwanted child fall on? I feel it falls to the mother and an already strained state welfare system.

I have a nineteen-year-old daughter, the thought of my daughter losing rights that I enjoyed as a young woman is unbearable. We must not move back in time, we must move forward. We must care for the children who are already here, many of whom are living in poverty. My past experience as an inner-city 7/8 grade teacher made this fact clear to me. Eliminating childhood poverty is where our state resources should go. Not spent fighting to take away female rights. The amount of money the state will spend fighting this bill, if passed, will do a disservice to those Ohioans so desperately in need of help and resources.

America is an incredible country because we all have the ability to choose our own path. The government has no business intruding between a doctor and women. Abortion is a minor procedure and should be treated as such.

In this country, our founders intended to have a separation between church and state. Religion does not have a place in government. In my research and understanding, abortion has been used intentionally to divide constituents and pull their attention away from other matters. No one can clearly say when life begins, if a woman chooses not to have a child, she has to live with that decision and bear the consequences. Isn't that her right as an American woman? To make choices and live with the consequences, good or bad?

It is for these reasons I am urging you to vote no on SB 23.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Rayoum