

**Vanessa Hinsdale**  
**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,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Vanessa Hinsdale. I am the Administrative Director of Surgery for Planned Parenthood Southwest Ohio. I strongly opposed to Senate Bill 23 six-week Abortion Ban.

I have been with Planned Parenthood Southwest Ohio for two years. In my two years I have seen patients of every walk of life enter our center's doors. Abortion care is not limited to the uneducated, college students that party, irresponsible people, or drug addicts. Abortion care is personal decision that is hard enough for patients before lawmakers step in telling patients what they know what is best for patients. Especially if these lawmakers are unable to even become pregnant and experience this process. A majority of patients do not know they are pregnant until 6-8 weeks in gestation.

Once again, this not only includes patients that may behave recklessly but also patients that track their menstrual cycles and act responsibly to avoid pregnancy if possible. In addition, the science behind gestational periods and menstrual cycles is overwhelming for most people that walk in our doors. The initial symptoms of a pregnancy can easily be mistaken for something entirely different. Especially if a patient already has irregular periods or is using contraception measures. Then we have entire other group of patients that do not know their body or recognize the signs of early pregnancy. Those would be minors, earlier twenty something year olds, patients that were told they had reached a point where they were premenopausal and could no longer conceive. That group of patients usually discover they are pregnant around ten weeks and later. For both of those groups the most common statement is, "I had no clue I was that far along." Recently in our center we had a patient whose family could to support a pregnancy and she did not find out she was pregnant until she was at thirteen weeks. After searching the internet she felt like she had no choices.

Consequently, the patient started self-harming in hopes to terminate the pregnancy. Her family noticed that she was self-harming and took her to find help. Shortly thereafter, the family discovered that she was pregnant and had felt this was her only option. The patient has now been seen but sadly this is just one of the many examples my staff has helped with self-induction abortion care. Sadly, this woman is not alone. At PPSWO we frequently see patients that have look-up possible home remedies, attempted to purchase so-called abortion pills

online, or even sought out self-harm and suicide. If the six week ban becomes law, the number of such instances skyrocket. More and more women will resort to means of self-abortions or back alley abortions and risk death. No longer will women be questioning if an abortion is right for them and their situation, they will be forced to decide if they should carry to term and risk their wellbeing or that of their potential child or if should seek dangerous methods of abortion. This law will not stop the act of abortion, but rather force us back into the times before Roe v. Wade where life threatening back alley procedures were the norm.

When I interviewed with PPSWO, I interviewed with our CEO, Vice President of Patient Services, and our doctors. I was asked “why this job?” My answer was clear—my children. I need my sons to know there is always a choice for their partner and that their mother will always strongly support them. I need my daughter to know that she always has a choice when it comes to her body no matter what. I need my daughter to know that I fight the good fight every day and that my goal in life is to ensure every person receives the reproductive rights they deserve. That everyday my staff and I save a patient from not having to drop out of college, a family that is barely holding on financially to face the possibility of having another mouth to feed, or save someone from irreparably harming themselves all because of an unplanned pregnancy. We also help patients that just found out that the pregnancy they hoped and prayed for has so many genetic and medical issues that continuing would be a torturous process with next to zero odds of survival. We help the drug addict that has been clean for ten weeks and doing the best they can to make it eleven weeks, that may have gotten pregnant while they were sleeping with someone to pay for their next fix before they got clean. We help everyone that needs it, regardless of their condition because it is the right thing to do. This ban would make us unable to provide care no matter what as we seek to do for the good of humanity.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote no on this harmful and dangerous bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

I will now take any questions you may have.

Sincerely,  
Vanessa Hinsdale