Testimony of Margaret Light-Scotece, Board Member of Women Have Options – Ohio, Senate, Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee

Senate Bill 23

March 6, 2019

Chairman Burke, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to Senate Bill 23. My name is Margaret Light-Scotece and I am an Attorney and Board Member of Women Have Options – Ohio, Ohio’s only statewide abortion fund. I am here to testify on behalf of the pregnant folks of Ohio and the many loved ones who have shared their abortion stories with me.

The right to bodily autonomy is a fundamental right that should not be infringed upon without exceedingly strong state interest. S.B. 23 would ban abortion after the detection of a fetal heartbeat, which can occur as early as 6 weeks after conception, before most people are even aware they are pregnant. Similar heartbeat bills passed in other states have been declared unconstitutional at the state and federal level. If S.B. 23 is passed and signed into law abortion healthcare would be largely inaccessible for the majority of Ohioans. Not only is this unacceptable on moral and ethical grounds it also blatantly violates prior Supreme Court rulings. Passing a law knowing it is unconstitutional is a violation of the oath you took when you were sworn into office. It is a violation of the promise you made to the people of Ohio and it reckless and risks the health and wellbeing of tens of thousands of Ohioans. Enacting an abortion ban knowing it is unconstitutional is a waste of the tax payer funds expended to draft, pass, and defend an unconstitutional, uncaring, medically inaccurate, and dangerous law.

One in four women has an abortion in her lifetime, everyone loves someone who has had an abortion. Access to abortion is a fundamental human right, and S.B. 23 would strip that right from the majority of Ohioans who face a pregnancy decision. As an abortion advocate, abortion funder, attorney, parent, and citizen of the state of Ohio I strongly urge this committee to vote against this bill.

I would be happy to answer any questions from the Chairperson and the committee.