



Jaime Miracle
Deputy Director

Chairman Burke, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee, my name is Jaime Miracle and I am the Deputy Director of NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio. I am here to testify on behalf of our more than 50,000 members and activists against SR 41.

We oppose SR 41 because it is a dangerous, inflammatory resolution that has absolutely nothing to do with abortion or healthcare, and everything to do with inciting violence and hatred of medical professionals who provide compassionate abortion care, and stigmatizing individuals who have abortions.

Just two days ago we commemorated Abortion Provider Appreciation Day, when we recognize the sacrifices that medical professionals make when they choose to include abortion care as a part of their medical practice. Why March 10th? Because that was the day that Dr. David Gunn was shot and killed on his way to work by a sniper hidden in the trees for the simple reason that he was a doctor who provided abortion care. He isn't the only one. Dr. George Tiller was killed while volunteering as an usher at his church on a Sunday morning in May 2009. Shot once in the head at point blank range by a murderer who was radicalized by the incendiary language of anti-abortion activists.

Why do I mention those murders? Why is that connected to why we are here today? Today, in this august body, in this hallowed institution of the Ohio General Assembly, where the members are elected to serve the citizens of this great state we all call home, the Ohio Senate is considering SR 41. A resolution that has no purpose other than continuing the inflammatory rhetoric against medical professionals who provide abortion care. Today you are allowing the rhetoric of these anti-abortion extremists to bring us all down to their level, to denigrate this institution and the constituents you serve.

Each day these compassionate and dedicated medical professionals go to work, usually in clinics with additional security you don't find outside other medical offices, often having to go through a barrage of protestors screaming at them that they are murderers, sometimes wearing bullet proof vests because of threats against their lives.

They face protests by groups like Created Equal which ran a "killers among us" campaign against medical professionals in Dayton, not aimed at the professionals who provide abortion care, no- this campaign was aimed at doctors were willing to help clinics in the rare instance where there was a complication needing additional medical care. In this campaign they plastered their inflammatory rhetoric, including pictures of the doctors and text that they "support killing children" on the side of a box truck and parked it at the homes and offices of these physicians, and in one case even followed at a slow speed one of these doctor's teenage daughters as she took her afternoon run through her neighborhood. Again, just because these doctors were willing to treat a patient in the rare instance that there was a complication from an abortion procedure.

This body is not the only place where this is happening. It has been a coordinated attack from all levels. From the President in his State of the Union address, to state legislators, to op-eds laced with incendiary language¹, to protestors outside of abortion clinics this has been a carefully crafted and executed plan to

¹ <https://www.cincinnati.com/story/opinion/2019/02/21/opinion-ohio-not-follow-path-abortion-demand/2916201002/>

deamonzify abortion providers. For decades at all levels anti-abortion organizations have tried to use the truth to persuade individuals from choosing abortion care, but that did not work. So instead the movement has transitioned into lies and complete fabrications to smear these medical professionals and the patients they serve.

Since Trump took office there has been a 233% increase in trespassing at abortion clinics, a 194% increase in clinic obstructions, an 88% increase in death threats, and a 104% increase in clinic blockades². In the last month a window was broken out of the last remaining clinic in Toledo. These are real issues that this body should be addressing, rather than spending time demonizing health care professionals and worsening the OB/GYN shortage in our state. For the last two sessions, lawmakers have introduced legislation to protect medical professionals, volunteers, and patients of reproductive health care facilities from these attacks, but these bills have gotten nothing beyond sponsor testimony.

In conclusion, I would like to point out an all too common pattern that is being repeated here today. Each time anti-choice legislators move to pass the six week abortion ban, somehow the topic of abortions later in pregnancy is raised—either by passage of other abortion bans, or in this case, with a resolution supporting federal legislation that was designed to demonize abortion providers and their patients. The use of this tactic further reveals the utter lack of concern for the wellbeing and safety of Ohio abortion providers and their patients. Ohioans deserve better from their elected officials, that is why I am strongly urging you to vote no on the dangerously deceptive SR 41.

² <https://prochoice.org/wp-content/uploads/2017-NAF-Violence-and-Disruption-Statistics.pdf>