



Kasey Badgley
Opponent Testimony for Senate Bill 260
Ohio Senate Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee
Wednesday, February 26, 2020

Chairman Burke, Vice-Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee thank you for allowing me to testify in opposition to Senate Bill 260.

My name is Kasey Badgley. I am an organizer with River Valley Organizing Project, primarily based in Columbiana, Jefferson, and Mahoning counties. River Valley Organizing Project includes a drug war survivors union called UnHarming Ohio, which is comprised of leaders committed to restorative and transformative solutions for public health and justice that DEFY the isolation of incarceration, the impacts of racialized drug policies, and violent policing; empowering and strengthening the health and morale for all. We organize primarily in small towns, small cities, and rural areas. The passage of Senate Bill 260 would be explicitly harmful to folks in disenfranchised rural communities in Ohio who would need access to abortion services.

I'm personally from East Liverpool, Ohio. A small town that borders West Virginia and Pennsylvania with a population of roughly 10,000 people. We are some of the most impoverished people in the state, and we haven't had a Planned Parenthood or similar clinic in decades. Even our hospital no longer has a maternity ward. Prohibiting the use of telemedicine services would make receiving abortion care for people who are already a part of the most vulnerable populous nearly impossible as the closest clinic that provides services in-person is two hours away. Poverty-stricken, rural people don't have public transportation or insurance often-times and telemedicine is a wonderful innovation to deliver necessary medical advice, medication, and additional services to the people in those regions.

Through my work with River Valley Organizing Project and with UnHarming Ohio, I regularly work with a lot of very vulnerable populations. I am constantly engaging with young people, people who use substances, economically disadvantaged people and rural, Appalachian people. I've had several young people get pregnant and have to struggle to find a ride to receive abortion services for WEEKS, all while feeling the pressure to beat the clock because of other restrictive abortion legislation. If we eradicate all means of receiving telemedicine abortion services it's not only reinforcing forced pregnancy, but it's also contributing to a cycle of leaving rural, Appalachian people in the dark when it comes to new medical innovations, which ultimately keeps them in an inescapable cycle of poverty itself.



I humbly ask you to vote no on Senate Bill 260. Young people, rural communities, and areas without nearby clinics across Ohio would be the ones most impacted and harmed by this legislation.

Thank you again for allowing me to testify and I'm happy to take any questions the committee may have.