



Center FOR Christian Virtue

Public Policy. Engagement. Education.

To: Chair Susan Manchester
Vice Chair Al Cutrona
Ranking Member Beth Liston
House Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee

From: Nilani Jawahar
Legislative Liaison
Center for Christian Virtue

Re: Support for SB 157

Chair Manchester, Vice Chair Cutrona, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the House Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee,

My name is Nilani Jawahar and I am here on behalf of the Center for Christian Virtue, Ohio's largest Christian public policy organization. I am pleased to be here today in support of SB 157, also known as the Born Alive Infant Protection Act, which aims to protect children who survive attempted abortions.

Some claim that this bill is not necessary; that babies never survive abortions, and if they do they are kept alive. Tragically, that is not always the case. In fact, the CDC reports that between 2003-2014 at least 143 infants died after being born alive during an abortion procedure, and the report admits that this is almost certainly an underestimate because there are no federal abortion reporting requirements, so this data only comes from the nine states that actually do have reporting requirements.¹

A prime example of someone who has survived abortion is Gianna Jessen. Gianna had been in the womb for seven months before her mother went to a Planned Parenthood to have a late-term saline abortion back in 1977. Saline abortions use a saline solution to poison the baby, burning her inside and out. This method is generally no longer performed in the United States as it has been replaced with dilation and evacuation (D&E) abortions which dismember the child limb from limb. Gianna survived a saline abortion because the abortionist had not yet arrived at the facility and so a nurse was able to call an ambulance and transport her to the hospital.² "If abortion is about women's rights, then what were

¹ https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/health_policy/mortality-records-mentioning-termination-of-pregnancy.htm

² <https://downloads.frc.org/EF/EF19E62.pdf>



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mine?” Gianna asked the House Judiciary Committee when she testified in favor of the Born Alive Act back in 2015.

Another argument I’ve heard against this bill is that it will villainize the doctors who perform abortions. This bill was sponsored by two doctors. I can’t speak for either of them but I believe that they, and many other medical professionals, would agree that a doctor who would let an infant die without at least attempting to save her life is not worthy of his title. In fact, the original Hippocratic Oath actually had a clause which required the physician to vow that he would not give any sort of treatment to a pregnant woman with the intention of destroying the child.³ If the minimum we are asking of our doctors today is to preserve the life of a baby they attempted to abort once they realized she was capable of surviving outside the womb, I would say we have set the bar very low for what qualifies as “doing no harm.”

It is difficult to say when exactly a fetus is viable, or capable of living outside the womb, because every child is different and some can survive outside the womb earlier than others. Nevertheless, according to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, a fetus can be considered “perivable” as early as 20-25 weeks.⁴ “Perivable” means there is a slim chance of survival, but a chance nonetheless. In fact, the youngest surviving premature baby in the world was born at 21 weeks just last week.⁵ Keep that in mind when I tell you that in the year 2020 alone, the Ohio Department of Health reported that there were a total of 113 abortions performed at 21 weeks of gestation or later.⁶ This means that last year we in Ohio failed 113 children who may have been able to have meaningful lives outside their mothers’ wombs, but were never given the opportunity to try.

Instances of children surviving abortions are relatively uncommon, but this speaks more to the thorough nature of modern abortion procedures, and a lack of reporting, than to the capability of a baby to live despite efforts to end her life. And just as technology has made the abortion procedure more foolproof over the years, technology has also made life-sustaining treatment more accessible, so we are quickly running out of excuses for not

³ https://doctors.practo.com/the-hippocratic-oath-the-original-and-revised-version/#The_Classic_Hippocratic_Oath

⁴ <https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/obstetric-care-consensus/articles/2017/10/perivable-birth>

⁵ <https://apnews.com/article/university-of-alabama-birmingham-alabama-health-22cf07da9ef9381dd6166a66e56f957b>

⁶ https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/wcm/connect/gov/9a941c10-fc7d-40ae-8ae3-ac5757ab727f/Induced+Abortions+in+Ohio+2020.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CONVERT_TO=url&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE.Z18_MIHGGIK0N0JO00QO9DDDDM3000-9a941c10-fc7d-40ae-8ae3-ac5757ab727f-nMZbBrr



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requiring mothers to choose early delivery instead of abortion in the second and third trimesters. After all, the stated goal of abortion is to end a pregnancy. Doesn't giving birth also end a pregnancy?

If a baby does survive an abortion, I think she has proved that she is determined to live, and we ought to honor that and require that doctors do everything in their power to keep her alive and healthy, just as they would for a baby who was wanted by her mother.

Thank you once again for allowing me to speak on behalf of this important bill. If the committee has any questions for me, I will do my best to answer them.

The Center for Christian Virtue (CCV) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that endeavors to create an Ohio where God's blessings of life, family, and religious freedom are treasured, respected, and protected.

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