

My name is Laura Strietmann, Executive Director of Cincinnati Right to Life and former Associate Director of Pregnancy Center East in Cincinnati. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Senate Bill 157.

I have worked on the frontlines of the prolife movement for fifteen years. Ten of the years I directly worked with families experiencing unexpected pregnancies. I personally do not like to use the term “crisis pregnancy”. No pregnancy is a crisis, life coming into being is not a crisis. Unexpected with details to be sorted out, certainly, but not a crisis.

The pro-death and pro-abortion movement in Ohio and beyond promotes the belief that life is expendable, that abortion is like having a mole removed or it’s like a visit for a botox injection. The pro-death, pro-abortion camp has redefined life as a choice, not a person. And we know, all for the name of profit.

Unexpected pregnancies have always been part of the world and will always be part of being human. What has not always been accepted is the legal killing of a defenseless, unique and unrepeatable son or daughter in the womb.

So we gather here today to talk about caring for a unique and unrepeatable person that was born alive, rather than killed in the womb. How utterly tragic and disgusting our world has sunk to this low. Abortions take place in Ohio, legally up to 22 weeks.

At 22 weeks, a baby is fully formed and quite honestly looks just like they would when born, except for size. How do I know this? I was in the room when a client, and now friend, delivered a baby in a Cincinnati hospital at 21 weeks. My friend/client was having pregnancy complications with her twins and put on bed rest in the hospital. She even received a rare medical procedure for twins, when she had her cervix sewn shut to try to save the lives of the babies from a preterm birth.

Sadly, the procedure did not work and my friend stood up to use the restroom in the hospital and the baby girl, literally just slid out. She was beautiful, perfectly formed, breathing and trying to cry. Medical professionals descended upon the room to minister medical treatment. This child was 21 weeks and too small to make it but we were able to baptize her and hold her and love her while she breathed. Some babies have lived when delivered at this age, but that was not the plan for this sweet girl.

The doctors tried to stop labor and keep the baby boy in mom's womb for at least several more weeks. Sadly, he was delivered later that same day and he also breathed, was baptized, held, rocked and loved until he passed into the next life.

These babies had value, they were created with a plan and a purpose.

A part of this story that is sad to share, is mom was distraught from being on bedrest and not being able to work. I had met her when she was considering an abortion. She had bills to pay and other children at home. While in the hospital she kept threatening me to get up and walk across the street to abort her twins.

This is how fragile the line of life and death, love and support, crisis and hope is when women are not feeling fully loved and supported.

I think of this law, and what makes a woman even be in such a dark place that she would choose the gruesome killing procedure of ending the life of her own child. At any stage but most especially later in pregnancy where a child will live. This is dark, this is death. This is not good for Ohioans. We must do better and enact SB 157 to protect any son or daughter who lives rather than dies during an assassination attempt.

We cannot be a state where live babies are dumped in garbage cans. We must care for Ohio babies. As absurd as it is, we must pass this law and demand that all Ohioans, no matter their age or state in life, get life saving care.

Thank you and respectfully,

Laura Strietmann

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