

Mr. Gary Taphorn  
Statement to the Ohio House Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee  
In Support of Sub. S. B. No. 157  
November 18, 2021

Chairwoman Manchester, Vice Chair Cutrona, ranking Member Liston and members of the Committee,

Thank you sincerely for considering these submitted comments on Senate Bill 157, “Regards child born alive after attempted abortion.” I am a retired United States Army officer, a former DoD employee at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, and the current Vice President of the Right to Life Action Coalition of Ohio (RTLACO). I am a native Ohioan and have been a resident of Bellbrook, Ohio since 2003. I respectfully ask the committee to consider three points concerning this bill.

First, I call your attention to the Ohio Revised Code, Section 9.041, which states, “It is the public policy of the state of Ohio to prefer childbirth over abortion to the extent that is constitutionally permissible.” The situation being considered under SB 157 seems to be a direct application of that law. It may be true that both the mother and the abortionist have begun an abortion procedure with other plans in mind. However, if the infant (potentially exercising his or her own right of choice to be born) interrupts their plans, not only simple human compassion but existing Ohio law should require us to take every measure to save and care for the child.

Secondly, I would submit that existing Ohio law is regrettably not sufficient to protect the child. If we bother to look for them, we can readily find examples in which infants who have been born during the course of an abortion procedure have been left to die or even directly killed by the abortionist. Pennsylvania abortionist Kermit Gosnell was convicted in 2013 of first-degree murder in the deaths of three babies who were born alive before having their necks cut with scissors. He was no doubt responsible for many more. SB 157 will hopefully prevent or deter a similar “Gosnell situation” in Ohio. I would also mention that the current governor of Virginia is on record as supporting allowing such a child to die after being born alive.

Third, in reviewing testimony against this bill before your Senate counterparts (Government Oversight and Reform Committee), I noticed the statement of Dr. David Hackney, a “practicing specialist in Maternal Fetal Medicine.” Dr. Hackney noted that one of his areas of “primary concern” involved physicians “in the rare though unfortunate situation in which they have to deliver a fetus prior to viability in order to save the life or health of the mother.” While I readily admit that I have no competence in medical issues, this statement runs directly counter to what I understand is the case with fetal medicine. For example, as far back as 1981, then Surgeon General of the United States Dr. C. Everett Koop stated, “Abortion as a necessity to save the life of the mother is so rare as to be nonexistent.” Likewise, even Alan Guttmacher of Planned Parenthood acknowledged this in 1967 -- “Today it is possible for almost any patient to be brought through pregnancy alive, unless she suffers from a fatal disease such as cancer or leukemia...” Both of these statements are readily available online. They would seem to minimize or negate Dr. Hackney’s stated concern about Ohio’s “increasingly complicated laws.”

While I understand that some aspects of regulating abortion may be controversial, the basic requirement in SB 157 is so fundamentally humane and just that I find it difficult to recognize any reason for opposition. I respectfully thank you for your consideration of these comments and urge you to pass SB 157.