



Sarah Inskeep
Opponent Testimony for Senate Bill 157
Ohio House Family, Aging, and Human Services Committee
December 6, 2021

Chairwoman Manchester, Vice-Chair Cutrona, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the House Families, Aging, and Human Services committee, thank you for allowing to provide testify in opposition to Substitute Senate Bill 157.

My name is Sarah Inskeep, and I am the Ohio Policy and Movement Building Director for URGE: Unite for Reproductive and Gender Equity, which a Reproductive Justice organization led by and for young people in the South and Midwest. I am also a proud Cincinnati and someone who was patient at the Planned Parenthood on Auburn Avenue and support person to many people who accessed life-saving care at the clinics this bill seeks to close. On behalf of the URGE's staff, young members, and the people who I love who have had abortions, I ask you to vote no and ultimately stop substitute Senate Bill 157.

Simply put – this legislation is yet another attempt to spread misinformation and stigma about abortion while denying people access to critical compassionate care and attempting to shut doors of the two remaining clinics in Cincinnati and Dayton that provide surgical procedures in the Southwestern region of the state.

A central pillar of Reproductive Justice framework is acknowledging and respecting people's diverse experiences with respect to bodily autonomy and agency, which includes pregnancy, abortion, postpartum care, and much more. The decision of whether to continue a pregnancy is a personal one, often made in consultation with trusted loved ones and medical providers, and should be able to be made without barriers or political interference. People's circumstances and reasoning for their decision to have an abortion or not are unique and be vastly different from one another. People who experience various medical situations with pregnancy such as miscarriage and fetal anomaly deserve to be supported in their health care decisions, regardless of what they are, and must be treated with dignity, compassion, and respect. It's long overdue that politicians accept this reality and promote policy that truly supports Ohioans' various medical circumstances and stop pushing an anti-abortion agenda that is rooted in false claims and stigma.

Senate Bill 157 is a recycled effort by anti-abortion politicians and special interest groups – nationally and here in Ohio – to assert their dangerous, inflammatory rhetoric and attempt redundantly legislate provisions that federal and state laws already address.¹ As others testified

¹ Vox, *A Republican-backed bill to protect "abortion survivors" just failed. It still matters*, <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2019/2/25/18239964/born-alive-abortion-survivors-protection-2019-sasse>



before me, Senate Bill 157 isn't about making "abortion safer" as the sponsor of this legislation and its supporters have asserted, but rather it is to criminalize providers, close clinics doors, and effectively push access to legal abortion completely out of Ohioans reach.ⁱ

People, not politicians, know what is best for best for themselves, their families, and futures. People must be able to trust their medical professionals to provide them timely, evidence-based information, and compassionate care when they need it. If passed and enacted, Substitute Senate Bill 157 not only strip individuals of the ability to make these critical health care decisions, but it would penalize the medical professionals who provide it while eliminating access to abortion care in an entire region of the state.

Whether it is Substitute Senate Bill 157 or any of the other abortion bans pending in this legislature, the supermajority's prioritization and passage of this legislation was a will continue to disproportionately harm Black and brown women, people in rural communities, folks with low-incomes, and transgender and non-binary people in our state – many of whom are your constituents that you come to this building to supposedly represent every day. Ohioans deserve compassionate reproductive health care, including abortion services, without having to navigate a barrage of lies and barriers.

With that, I urge the members to vote no Substitute Senate Bill 157 and will do my best to answer any questions the committee has. Thank you.

ⁱ Dayton Daily News. 'Born Alive' Denounced as Futile, Supporters Say it Will Make Abortion Safer. <https://www.daytondailynews.com/local/born-alive-bill-denounced-as-futile-supporters-say-it-will-make-abortions-safer/WLAGAV5W4ZBCFDBNDLTOVYRBIA/>