



Testimony of First Year Cleveland
The Ohio House of Representatives
Health Committee
February 12, 2025

Chairwoman Schmidt, Vice Chairwoman Deeter, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on behalf of First Year Cleveland in support of House Bill 4, designating September 19th as “Ohio Stillbirth Prevention Day”.

My name is Angela Newman-White, and I am the Executive Director of First Year Cleveland. Our mission is to mobilize the community through partnerships and a unified strategy to reduce infant deaths and racial disparities. We are committed to ensuring that every baby lives to see their first birthday, and every mother has the resources and support to celebrate that milestone.

Infant mortality is often referred to as a key indicator of a community’s health and well-being and a marker for social progress. According to the CDC, the State of Ohio’s infant mortality rate was 7.11 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2022, ranking us 43rd out of 50 states across the country. Within the state, there are some cities and neighborhoods with rates nearly four times higher.

Between 2017-2023, there were 595 fetal deaths in Cuyahoga County, with over 30% occurring after 32 weeks gestation. Recommendations from our local fetal infant mortality review to reduce fetal losses include raising awareness on fetal monitoring, increased support by healthcare providers, chronic disease management and transportation.

First Year Cleveland is dedicated to addressing these systemic issues by advocating for policy changes, supporting families through targeted programs, and raising awareness about infant mortality and maternal health. Establishing a statewide Stillbirth Prevention Day would help bring greater attention to these issues, drive more funding towards critical initiatives, and ultimately ensure that all babies in Cuyahoga County – and across Ohio – have a healthy start in life.

Thank you for your time and consideration. With your support, we can help mothers across Cuyahoga County and Ohio access the resources they need to protect their health and their babies’ lives.