

Chair Schmidt, Vice Chair Deeter, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the Health Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in writing today. My name is Melanie Stempowski MD, and I have strong opposition to House Bill 324.

House Bill 324 was written specifically to target drugs used for medical abortion. It creates unnecessary barriers to medications that are safe and effective.

Mifepristone was first approved by the US FDA in 2000. The World Health Organization (WHO) lists mifepristone and misoprostol as essential medications. When used as directed, the medication regimen is safe and highly effective.

Data on mifepristone clinical use from 2001-2004 for 95,000 women were collected and show the complication rate (with need for hospitalization) at 0.2%, (ref. Safety of Mifepristone Abortions in Clinical Use. Contraception 72 (3), 175-178, 2005).

A systematic review of the literature regarding mifepristone in 2020 concluded that mifepristone and misoprostol are highly effective and safe, (ref: Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Canada 23 (12), 1532-1542, 2020).

This bill requires that any and all medications be reviewed by the Director of Health in consultation with others to determine whether they cause serious side effects. But, that determination can be based on insurance claims and patient reports. Our current Secretary of the US department of Health and Human Services has no medical training or degree, and no scientific credentials. Safety of medications should be determined by scientific evidence, ideally from peer reviewed medical journals.

In November 2023, 57% of Ohio voters approved the Reproductive Freedom Amendment, indicating clear opposition to governmental involvement in personal health decisions. In doing so, Ohioans expressed significant concerns about government overreach that may limit individual autonomy regarding important life choices.

House Bill 324 undermines the will of the people in Ohio, decreases access to safe abortion medication, and potentially other medications. Scientific evidence should inform decisions impacting patient care and doctor patient relationships.

I urge you to respect scientific evidence and the Ohio Reproductive Freedom Amendment, and reject HB 324.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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