

Chairperson Schimidt, Vice-Chair Deeter, and Ranking Member Dr. Somani, thank you for accepting my testimony in opposition to House Bill 324. My name is Delilah Stack, and I am a Medical Student at Northeast Ohio Medical University. I am testifying on my own behalf, not on behalf of my institution. I am submitting this testimony in opposition to H.B. 324 today because it undermines evidence-based medical practice and threatens patient safety by restricting access to essential medications like mifepristone.

The non-peer reviewed report from the Ethics and Public Policy Center that H.B. 324 proponents have referenced is not strong, evidence-based medicine. Categorizing visits to the emergency room as an adverse event is a major flaw in this report, as it does not meet the criteria for an adverse event as defined by the FDA, which requires not only a visit to the ER but at least one other serious outcome. Subsequent treatment to complete the abortion also should not be considered an adverse event, as it is a measure of efficacy, not safety. Peer-reviewed research has consistently shown that mifepristone is safe and effective when prescribed in person or via telemedicine. There is no evidence that requiring a patient to have an in-person appointment with a physician increases the safety of the medication.

As a future physician, I will not be using the report from the Ethics and Public Policy Center to assess the safety of mifepristone or guide my management because it provides insufficient data to meaningfully inform medical decision-making, and I will discourage you from relying on it for the same reason. Guiding medical practice through weak, unsubstantiated claims only serves to harm patients and damage the trust we Ohioans place in our representatives.

I am a proud Ohioan and have always hoped to practice as a physician in Ohio, especially in areas where there are shortages of physicians. H.B. 324 will impair my ability to properly care for patients, especially in areas where access to physicians and healthcare services is limited. Bills like this also discourage students like me from practicing in Ohio, as people do not want to work in areas where they are bound to practice medicine in a manner that is not evidence-based. H.B. 324 will harm our most vulnerable patients by preventing them from receiving timely, appropriate care, and by worsening physician shortages in areas that are already the most impacted.

I urge all involved in H.B. 324 to consider the testimonies of myself and other medical professionals and vote no on this bill. Doing so will ensure that Ohioans are able to receive timely, appropriate healthcare as determined by medical professionals, and will ensure that medical professionals are not bound to practice based on insufficient evidence. I thank you for considering my testimony and for working to ensure the health of all Ohioans.