

Hello, all committee members, my name is Marha Gronas (she/her). I am a Cincinnati local taxpayer, voter, and advocate. I am here to speak against several points made in this budget.

When I had my first abortion, I was freshly 18, hiding a secret I didn't even know I had from parents who would have put me through more pain than childbirth had they found out.

I was a young woman who had just failed out of public high school due to distraction and physical distress. The responsibilities of it all fell on my shoulders alone. When I found I was over 10 weeks pregnant I did what any child would: I panicked. I was coming from a school that only taught abstinence and a family that did not explain to me what birds could do with bees. I was clueless and alone; scared didn't even begin to cover it.

I had one friend who continues to work in reproductive advocacy to this day, who, thank god, advised me to head to the closest Planned Parenthood to us, 1 of 14 that were open at the time and that were capable of providing abortion care. Over 10 years later, that Planned Parenthood that saved my life is now only 1 of 9 in the entire state of Ohio. The Planned Parenthood staff and incredible folks who ensured it stayed open and available for people requiring an abortion deserve to be protected. We deserve health care. We deserve funding. We deserve to take care of people who are able to become pregnant and support them through the entirety of their choice process. Without them, I would not be alive. My choice was not a simple one, but a terrifying one. When I say they saved my life, I could not be more truthful: there was no reality where I could proceed with the pregnancy and stay alive.

This proposed budget attacks so many points of a person's reproductive health and their abilities to make decisions autonomously. Today, these are the points I hope you'll address: I ask that you remove the provisions for funding schools using this curriculum and instead use it to fund true, honest, and effective sexual education, use the resources we all can clearly see you have to give and give it to people who CARE about others. I ask that this budget be used for funding REAL health care services that provide competent and non-judgmental services for pregnant Ohioans. Specifically, remove the \$20 million in funding for the Parenting and Pregnancy program. The CPC's you're funding, giving \$20 million to within the next 2 years, do not help pregnant people if their choice doesn't align with the institution's corrupted moral compass. These institutions coerce and confuse, they lie and tiptoe around their truth. There is no hiding the irresponsibility of these foundations that you all continue to choose to fund year after year.

Had you chose to put your money in the pockets of those who could truly educate me and my peers, you would have had one less pregnant teen scared to death about how they were going to live on. No child should consider their own life at the expense of someone else's comfort. I am here because I lived through my experiences. I am strong enough to tell you how deeply your hatred of women has affected me and so many others like me and ask you to please stop. Stop funding these agendas. Fund love. Fund support. Fund autonomy. Fund science. Fund community. Fund a second chance that EVERYONE deserves and will need one day, even you. Fund the people before the people decide we are done asking for things that were always our human right.

Thank you for your time.