

Good afternoon, Chair Huffman, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the Ohio Senate Health Committee.

Thank you for accepting this written testimony in strong opposition to House Bill 96 and its adverse impact on reproductive healthcare, maternal and infant mortality, and patient privacy. My name is Danielle Firsich, and I am the Director of Public Policy for Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio and Planned Parenthood Advocates of Ohio. We strongly oppose the following aspects of the HB96 budget bill:

- Requiring the Ohio Department of Health to develop a public electronic dashboard to publish abortion data reported to the department on a monthly basis.
- Requiring abortion providers to report the number of in state and out of state abortions to the Ohio Department of Health, including patient zip codes.
- Limiting Medicaid coverage of doula services to the six counties with the highest infant mortality rates and require total payments for doula services not to exceed \$500,000 in a given fiscal year.
- Removing the exception allowing the Ohio Department of Health Genetic Services funds to be used to counsel or refer for abortion in the case of a medical emergency.
- Failing to allocate the necessary \$35 million of funding for House Bill 7, the Strong Foundations Act, which went into effect on April 9, 2025.
- Allowing a tax credit of up to \$750 for donations made to Pregnancy Resource Centers.

This state budget poses serious risks and will hurt Ohioans rather than provide the support they both need and deserve. We all deserve the ability to decide if, when, and how we become pregnant. Abortion access allows people to make the decisions best for them—including for their career and economic future. Ohio Republicans are fully aware that their actions are unpopular and harmful to our communities. In 2023, 57% of Ohioans voted to enshrine reproductive freedom in the state constitution—making it clear that attacks on abortion rights go against the will of the people.

Publishing abortion data threatens patient privacy. Abortions in Ohio are already heavily monitored, and wasting more resources to surveil abortion interferes with a person's decision to have an abortion in Ohio, undermining the reproductive freedom amendment. Since 2011, Ohio has enacted over 31 restrictions on abortion access, leading to the closure of multiple health care facilities. Despite these challenges, Planned Parenthood health centers in Ohio have continued to be a haven for people fleeing their home state to access essential abortion care.

House Bill 7, the Strong Foundations Act, addresses maternal and infant mortality to improve health, developmental, and learning outcomes for infants and mothers via expansions to prenatal, postnatal, infant, and toddler health care, early intervention, and wraparound services and supports. Despite House Bill 7 taking effect on April 9, 2025, the funding mechanism for the bill was stripped in the final hours of the 135th General Assembly in 2024. And now, Ohio legislators have failed to address the funding need in the new state budget, despite their promise to do so. In fact, many programs that directly impact and benefit growing children and families have had funding greatly reduced, or eliminated entirely.

This budget bill also allows a tax credit of up to \$750 for donations made to Pregnancy Resource Centers. Rather than allowing Senate Bill 40 to go through the normal committee hearing process, allowing for transparency and public input, this budget incorporates the mechanisms of that bill into the state budget itself. Crisis pregnancy centers (CPCs), also known as fake clinics, are institutions that spread misinformation about pregnancy and abortion. Under the guise of providing health care services like free pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, and diapers, these institutions cause great harm in communities. CPCs outnumber abortion health centers 16:1. They do not staff health care providers, and the information shared with them is not protected by HIPAA.

In the 2025-2027 budget alone, fake clinics will receive \$20 million to spread disinformation about pregnancy options. Fake clinics use coercive tactics not based on standard medical practices to shame people into keeping their pregnancies, even if they don't want to. Giving even more money to fake clinics funnels funds away from real reproductive health care and into the already deep pockets of anti-abortion groups who lobby conservative politicians to continue these culture wars instead of what Ohioans want - affordable health care and child care.

At Planned Parenthood Advocates of Ohio, we believe that every pregnant person deserves high-quality, accessible, and affordable health care that is delivered with humanity, dignity, and respect. We require not only robust public health systems and policies that support pre and postnatal care, but also a true dedication to increasing access so that all pregnant people and their children can flourish and thrive. I strongly encourage you to invest our taxpayer dollars in evidence-based care from licensed medical providers, and programs that actually serve to address health crises like the heinous maternal and infant mortality rates across this state. I strongly encourage you to place patients and their families first by allocating power and resources toward organizations that provide expert care. And finally, I strongly encourage you to vote no on HB96.

Thank you for your time and attention.