

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, my name is Dylan Harrington. In 2013 and 2014 I served as a House Intern for Rep. Tony Burkley of the 82<sup>nd</sup> District, and I now serve as the policy advocate and marketing coordinator for Created Equal, a national pro-life advocacy organization located here in Columbus. I come before you interested in the fate of House Bill 69, representing the voices of the hundreds of Ohioans that support Created Equal.

In doing this, I am particularly interested in Division E of the bill's language, which prohibits the practice of abortion after the detection of a fetal heartbeat.

Lines 1 and 5 of Division E give clarity to the thrust of this legislation—which is to not merely require that abortionists search for a fetal heartbeat, but to prohibit abortion once that heartbeat has been detected. It is this portion of the bill in particular which I champion—for it is another step in our nation's ongoing march for human rights for all. Civil rights means not only acknowledging the humanity of the unborn, but also protecting them from death—just as veritable civil rights for the 20<sup>th</sup> century African-American would not have been informing others of his humanity but giving them legal protection.

As a citizen of the state of Ohio, and having been a pro-life activist since my early teenage years, I've followed arguments against this specific portion of the bill, and I feel compelled to respond to a small selection of those arguments.

1. Some object with the claim that prohibiting abortion in this way would restrict Ohio women's rightful choice. But every person who says that would condemn a society for allowing women to kill their born children in the name of choice. Why? Because born children are human. But modern science confirms that unborn fetuses are human, too. Thus, they must be equally protected. Please note that I said "science," not religion or philosophy. The humanity of an unborn fetus with a beating heart is an undisputed scientific fact, not a religious question. We would never allow the killing of a born child no matter how long her parents had labored or prayed over the idea. We would never allow the killing of a born child for health anomalies. Why? Because born children are human. But, again, science confirms that fetuses are human, too. Indeed, to prohibit abortion is no less oppressive of the rights of women than telling women they may not kill their toddlers or shoot their husbands. These are not rights. These are acts of injustice which must not be permitted in a civilized society like our own. The state makes decisions like these for us all of the time. When I go home tonight, the state has told me that I may not kill my wife or my one month old daughter. The government does not trust me to decide what to do.
2. Others have said that this will prevent women who've been violated by rape and incest from getting the care they need. First, I must note that in no other societal dilemma do we justify killing children for the sins of their fathers. While I therefore believe abortion should not be permitted for rape or incest, we must keep our discussion relevant to the bill in question. These violated women are given the best aid when they seek immediate care—and House Bill 69 would not prohibit abortion in their situations because these immediate responses to the rape or incest would occur prior to the medical detection of a fetal heartbeat at six to seven weeks gestational age. While a matter worth discussing, questions of rape or incest are truly irrelevant to the legislation on your desks.
3. I've also heard some object with the claim that this is not the right issue—that our state legislature should be taking up the matter of jobs and the economy rather than abortion legislation. I will not dispute the importance of fiscal debates, yet I ask: what could be more important than the securing of human rights? If thousands of toddlers were being killed daily, who would dare stand before you today and tell you to leave that matter aside

in preference of economic policy? Toddlers are humans. Fetuses are humans. Do we in 21<sup>st</sup> century Ohio stand for human rights for all or have we decided that some humans are not equal?

4. Lastly, I've heard the objection that the legislation in front of you is unconstitutional because there is a chance that it simply will not stand against *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark decision allowing abortion to be legalized. My response to this is two-fold. First: *Roe* is unconstitutional, not this legislation. One need not examine long our nation's historical jurisprudence long before seeing clearly that the decision of *Roe v. Wade* is the one that is constitutional, not this bill. The *Roe v. Wade* decision involved the deliberate abuse of completely unrelated case law, as well as the complete disregard of hundreds of years of court precedent that actually *affirmed* prenatal life. Therefore, to object to the legislation before you on the grounds that it doesn't align with *Roe* is wrong, because *Roe* itself is wrong. My second response to the objection of unconstitutionality is that this is not the job of the legislature, nor of this committee. The legislature must keep in mind the constitution, but must not speculate as to what the courts will uphold.

Rather than bow to *Roe*, or bow to supposed "women's rights," I urge you to remember your nation's creed—that all men are created equal—rather than bow to *Roe*. To allow the killing of unborn humans is an utter violation of this creed. With HB 69 before you today, you have an unprecedented opportunity to honor this creed written by the founders and echoed by human rights champions such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Now is the time to champion human rights. The power is in your grasp. Will you allow injustice? Will you inform women? Or will you protect young humans? Let's move forward in Ohio and make history as we end prejudice and fight for human rights. Please pass this bill, because otherwise, in the great state of Ohio, hundreds of human children will certainly continue to die each day.

Thank you