



Testimony in Opposition to House Bill 69

**Submitted to: Ohio House of Representatives
Community and Family Advancement Committee**

**Submitted by: Nancy R. Pitts
Board Member
Women Have Options**

Date: March 7, 2015

Chairman Derickson, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to House Bill 69. My name is Nancy Pitts, and I'm a member of the board of directors of Women Have Options, Ohio's abortion fund, which helps low-income women afford their reproductive choices.

Eighteen years ago, I had an abortion. I wasn't raped. I wasn't molested. To my knowledge, there were no threats to my health or my life. I was simply a young woman, with a boyfriend and a job, beginning graduate school, who didn't want to be pregnant. I do not regret this decision. I do not mourn or grieve. It was the right decision for me, and I would make it again.

My experience with abortion is completely normal. About one-third of American women will have an abortion.¹ In fact, it is one of the most commonly performed medical procedures in the United States.² Every year in Ohio, about 30,000 women have an abortion,³ almost enough to fill Ohio Stadium, the 'Shoe, every three years. Most of these women are in their twenties, most already have children, and most are religious.⁴ We are your daughters, mothers, sisters, partners, co-workers, neighbors, and friends. We are leaders, lawyers, ministers, business owners, waitresses, elected officials, farmers, philanthropists, teachers, taxpayers, veterans, voters, and citizens. We are the women in your towns, neighborhoods, and churches.

This bill is an affront to the women of Ohio. This bill infantilizes women. It pretends that our experiences don't exist, that our families don't exist, that our children don't exist, that we aren't capable of making decisions about our bodies based on our own faiths, beliefs, and experiences.

¹ <http://www.gutmacher.org/pubs/sfaa/pdf/ohio.pdf>

² http://www.prochoice.org/about_abortion/facts/medical_abortion.html

³ <http://www.gutmacher.org/pubs/sfaa/ohio.html>

⁴ <http://www.gutmacher.org/pubs/sfaa/ohio.html>

I'd like to share the story of a woman whose name I do not know and would not share even if I did. She chose to have an abortion this past summer in Ohio. She asked my organization for help, and this was her request:

"Hello. I am a young lady in need of your help. I am a college student and a full time mommy of a 3 year old little girl. I also work part time to help pay my bills, and put food on the table for my little one. I have big plans for my life and dreams I would like to chase. I have made this decision not only for my future but for the future of my daughter, to give her what she deserves in life. Your help would be so greatly appreciated. Thank you for your time and support."

Every year, hundreds of women contact my organization seeking funding for an abortion, and they tell us the stories of their hopes and dreams, they tell us about their families—or the families they hope to have one day. Abortion helps women stay in school, care for their families, and live their best lives. On behalf of these women, I urge the committee to vote against this bill.