

Testimony of Margarita Maria Lassaletta, MD in support of House Bill 69, "The Heartbeat Bill"

I am a medical doctor practicing in Wadsworth, Ohio. I graduated in 1992 from East Carolina University School of Medicine. Before medical school, I received a BA in English and studied Pre-Med at Davidson College in Davidson, NC. I was heavily grounded in the Humanities and continued to do some acting work in medical school (portraying and raising awareness about **ethical issues in medicine**). I did post graduate work in conjunction with Creighton University in Nebraska. There I immersed myself in **Naprotechnology, a very specific, detailed and highly successful approach to the spectrum of women's health problems from endometrioses to ovarian cysts to infertility, etc.**

After my studies I joined a large doctor-owned group. I left in late 2003 to begin my own practice in Wadsworth. I am Board Certified in Family Medicine and I love medicine and people. **I practice the full spectrum, seeing patients in the hospital and office, doing in-office surgeries and delivering babies.**

I am in favor of HB 69 because it makes sense. It respects the dignity of the unborn human, still part of the human family. It is the truest bill that has come out in a long time.

Embryology and genetics show that human life starts at conception, not implantation, and though this bill does not address this scientific fact, it does address a physiological truth: Humans' hearts beat with human hearts. (Fetuses don't become cabbages or puppies. Human embryos grow to become human fetuses which, if allowed, will become human babies, which if allowed become toddlers, then preschoolers, then middle-schoolers and so on.) Each one of us listening today WAS there. There are a host of historical and political and, particularly for physicians, financial reasons why protecting the weakest humans is a difficult choice. **But it is the most human choice.**

In all my years of practicing medicine--from Emergency to private practice, and in taking many, many gynecological histories, I can tell you that the vast majority of women I have interviewed and cared for, who had abortions, are either ashamed or sorry. Several have asked it not be put in their records, some have asked their spouses never be told (which of course I won't/can't do), some have explained it as an error of youth or fear, some told me they were forced by a boyfriend or parent and have broken down crying about this. **I have delivered several women who had made up their minds to adopt their babies out. I also have adult patients who were adopted. I have not encountered the former or latter who were sorry about the choice of adoption.**

Lastly, I would like to speak on behalf of so many of my infertile women and couples that I treat and see weekly. We have a growing epidemic in this country of infertility where 8-10% of couples experience this often devastating reality. IVF and other Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) is hardly highly successful and very expensive. Inherent to it are several ethical concerns that should give us pause--women with litter-numbers of infants, the problems of prematurity, selective reduction, higher rates of auto immune issues and cancers in artificially conceived persons, frozen embryos, embryo donation, embryo destruction and experimentation, to name a few. **If there were more infants up for adoption, many of these couples that cannot conceive (with or without treatment) could be parents and have families.** This is a particular concern for older couples, many who waited to marry later at ages where both ART and Naprotechnology are much less successful.

Thank you for your time and attention. I say this with gratefulness on my behalf, but more so on that of my patients who have been and are yet to be, and especially on behalf of the unborn you will save if you facilitate the passing of HB 69. Thank you, Margarita Maria Lassaletta, MD