



State Representative Margaret K. Conditt, 52th District

House Bill 294 Sponsor Testimony

Community and Family Advancement Committee

October 6, 2015

Chairman Derickson, Vice Chair Ginter, Ranking Member Howse, and to all of the members of the *Community & Family Advancement* committee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today about House Bill 294.

This legislation would require the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) to ensure that the funds it receives from the state, or from a variety of federal funds, are not used to perform or promote elective abortions.

For example, if ODH were to receive funds from the "Breast & Cervical Cancer Mortality Prevention Act of 1990", that the money would be used for the prevention of breast and cervical cancer and *not* used for elective abortions.

Or if they receive monies from the "Minority HIV/AIDS Initiative", that it is spent to prevent HIV and AIDS and *not* used for elective abortions.

House Bill 294 also lists two additional federal funds, i.e., 1) the "Infertility Prevention Project" of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and 2) the "Violence Against Women Act of 1994".

HB 294 also states in lines 79-82 that "all state funds [to ODH]...including...infant mortality reduction or infant vitality initiatives" funds are not to be used to perform or promote elective abortions...nor to contract with some other entity...nor become an affiliate with another entity who performs or promotes elective abortions.

Our Infant Mortality Reduction funds are intended to reduce the number of children who don't reach their first birthday. Currently, our state is ranked 47th in the nation for infant mortality. There were 1,047 Ohio infant deaths in 2012 alone. And yet we had over 12,000 abortions in Ohio last year. We need to focus our health care tax dollars toward saving babies.

Why do I feel so passionately about this?

My father was an OB/GYN who delivered babies for almost 50 years. I grew up right next to the hospital so he could go over and deliver a baby and make it home in time for dinner. It seemed like every dinner table conversation was about delivering babies. In excruciating detail, my siblings and I heard the stories of all the children our father delivered: the still-born, the Siamese twins, and of course, the many, many healthy baby boys and girls he brought into this world.



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I guess you could say that I'm just intrinsically pro-life, and that's why I don't want my tax dollars to be used to pay for abortions, period.

Many people in the media refer to this legislation as the "Defund Planned Parenthood Bill", but there is no mention of any particular abortion provider in this legislation. HB 294 states that if ODH receives the monies that I just described, that they not be used for elective abortions.

Some people have argued that this legislation will harm the funding of women's health, but I don't see it that way. I see it *helping* women and children by focusing the dollars on staying healthy. There are 280 Health Care Facilities that accept Medicaid patients in the state of Ohio in both rural and urban areas. That is 10 times the number of Planned Parenthood facilities in the state. There is no shortage of health care in this state.

People have also asked how much money House Bill 294 will divert from abortion providers. Each and every one of you on this committee and in the audience can actually look up on the website, www.ohiocheckbook.com under Planned Parenthood to see that they received 1.3 million dollars in 2014 from ODH. You can also look up any of the other providers on this website to see how much they might have received from any state agency. That's www.ohiocheckbook.com.

Representative Patmon and I have been discussing this legislation since early spring as a potential amendment to the past budget bill, since it deals with budgetary items. We decided, however, to submit it as a stand-alone bill, so that it would have a proper vetting in a committee.

To continue that vetting process, Mr. Chairman, I'm going to turn this over to my worthy joint-sponsor, Representative Patmon, and then we can answer questions after he has testified.