

Chairman Derickson, Vice Chair Ginter, Ranking Member Howse and Committee Members--

Thank you for allowing me to testify before you today. My name is Pat Todak and I represent Heartbeat of Toledo, one of the 142 pregnancy resource centers located in Ohio. Heartbeat of Toledo has been around since 1971, two years before Roe v Wade. We were actually the first pregnancy center in Ohio and where Heartbeat International began.

Heartbeat has two locations in Toledo. One is located close to the University of Toledo while our newest location is in East Toledo. East Toledo has more single mother households than 98.7 percent of the U.S. and the per capita income of residents is lower than 98.1 percent of the neighborhoods in America.

This past fiscal year ending May 31, Heartbeat served 1,828 women and their families. Our medical services are all free and include pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, options counseling, nurse consultations, prenatal vitamins, and STD testing. I include options counseling as a medical service because we are a medically ethical clinic who wholeheartedly believes in the principle of informed consent. In the same way that we all would want information on all of our options if we were given a diagnosis of heart disease or cancer, we believe that every woman who has the diagnosis of pregnancy should have access to information on all of her options and the resources available. Since abortion clinics make money for every abortion they sell, many push abortions rather than helping a woman determine what is best for her.

I should mention that Heartbeat of Toledo is a real medical clinic. We have a volunteer doctor who serves as our medical director and a second volunteer OB/Gyn who reads all of our ultrasound scans. We have 10 registered nurses—two who are paid and the rest volunteer. These women do all of the pregnancy and STD tests and each health assessment. Two are also trained to do limited obstetrical ultrasounds. We also have two additional sonographers. Our STD tests are sent to a lab for processing.

On the counseling side we have two women with master's degrees in counseling as well as a social worker.

When a woman comes in she is given a pregnancy test. She meets with an advocate who goes over all of her options and then meets with a registered nurse. If the test is positive, an ultrasound is typically offered. Since 31 percent of early pregnancies will naturally end due to miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy or blighted ovum, it is important for a woman considering an abortion to confirm viability before she would schedule at an abortion clinic. Viability can be confirmed typically at 6 weeks, 1 day. If a woman has an abortion before that date, there is close to a one-in-three chance that she is aborting a pregnancy that would likely have miscarried.

Besides confirming viability, there is another reason why a woman facing an unplanned pregnancy should come to a pregnancy center first. Unlike Planned Parenthood and other abortion centers, pregnancy centers don't financially benefit from the decision these women make. We present all three options in a neutral manner. We know that talking about all three options will give women the information they need to make a decision that is best for them.

A significant part of what we do is to empower women. It's estimated that 64 percent of women are feeling pressured to abort by a boyfriend or family member. By empowering these women we are able to help them advocate for themselves and their unborn children.

Cari* is one of the young women we served this past year. She came to us in January feeling suicidal as a result of her unplanned pregnancy. A senior in college, she was being pushed to abort by the baby's dad. She met with our counselor and was invited to come back weekly as she struggled with her decision. Ultimately Cari gained the confidence she needed to share her pregnancy with her parents and end her relationship with her boyfriend. After exploring all of her options, she chose adoption. Her daughter was born last month and is living with her new family. Cari will graduate in December and plans to go to law school. She continues to keep in touch with one of our counselors. She chose an open adoption which has allowed her to keep in contact with the adoptive family and her birth daughter.

Just last week, a nursing student named Makayla* came in to observe at our medical clinic as part of a class requirement. At the end of the day she confided in one of our staff that she had been a patient at our clinic nearly 3 years

ago. We asked her to write her story. She wrote, "Of all the challenges I've faced in life, being pregnant at the age of 20 was by far the scariest experience. There was so much uncertainty on what I should do. I felt as if I had no one to run to. I didn't want to see the shame and regret on the faces of my peers because I felt the news was just that bad. So I decided to schedule an appointment at Heartbeat. The impact of that one appointment helped me make one of the greatest decisions of my life. My son will be 2 years old this December and I can't imagine my life without him. Thanks Heartbeat for all your support."

Besides medical services, Heartbeat of Toledo offers free prenatal and parenting classes and the opportunity to earn free baby items for each class completed. We also offer emergency assistance to families in need as well as relationship classes.

One of Heartbeat's newest programs is being part of the Northwest Ohio Pathways Hub. The Pathways Program works to improve birth outcomes in Lucas County by identifying pregnant women most at risk for having low birthweight babies and connecting them to community resources. Pregnant women need early and regular prenatal care to help ensure their babies are born full term and at a healthy weight.

We became part of this program in June and our community health worker already has a full caseload of 42 women. She helps these women connect to medical care and provides health education. Specifically, she helps expectant moms secure medical insurance, find a doctor, enroll in the Women Infant Children program, Help Me Grow, and join our parenting program.

We have been asked by the Ohio Hospital Council to add another community health worker to our staff because there are so many pregnant women needing help. There are a lot of resources out there to help pregnant women, but many of them are unaware of all the help that is available. We plan to add another staff person by the end of this year.

The abortion rate in Lucas and Wood counties has declined significantly since we became medical at the end of 2010. Lucas County residents had 1,565 abortions in 2010 compared to 528 in 2014, while Wood County went from 222 abortions to 63. The number of abortions performed in Lucas County also declined from 2,563 to 733 during the same time period. We know that some of

the decline this past year was due to the closure of one of our abortion clinics. We believe that a significant reason for the steady decline over the past four years is due to a much more proactive effort on our part and that of the Pregnancy Center of Greater Toledo to reach and be known by women facing unplanned pregnancies. If women are aware of our services and the resources available to them, they are much less likely to choose abortion.

The others here today have given you their perspective on why Planned Parenthood should be defunded. I'm here representing the pregnancy centers who are out there who want to help women—treating them with love and respect—and helping new and expectant moms and dads to be strong, confident parents. I know for a fact that there are many other options for women other than Planned Parenthood; options that do not involve taking a human life.

*Names Changed to Protect Privacy