

November 4th, 2015 Opponent Testimony – HB294

Jessica Mathews

Columbus, Ohio

I've never had an abortion. I'm 36 years old. I have a Nuclear Medicine Technology Degree, I work in Public Health, and I'm an avid pedestrian and bicycle advocate here in Columbus. I am opposed to HB294. If I were to become pregnant, there's this lingering, tacit acknowledgement that should I choose to terminate my pregnancy, I would struggle morally and ethically. I would not and many other women feel similarly. In a [2012 study](#) published by the journal *'Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health'* found that the vast majority of women seeking abortions – 87% - had high confidence in their decisions. This contrasts the notion that millions of women vacillate over whether to have an abortion.

I wonder whatever happened to, 'separation of church and state.' It is clear that this statement has become muddled and has been for quite some time; not only here in Ohio but across the country. The assault on abortion has been dominated by whether the fetus should live, thereby endowing it with a state of being. As a result, focus gets placed on the 'moral' debate rather than the woman.

This incessant motivation with creating legislation that limits MY decision to choose is demeaning and an insult; implying that women need help when deciding. Help, primarily from a gender who has never experienced a pap exam, has never experienced inserting a tampon, and has never experienced the regimented schedule of birth control.

Federal and state bans won't reduce abortions. Such laws will only make abortions less safe. Instead of playing the 'ethics' police, government can play a significant role in giving women and families the necessary tools we need to prevent unintended pregnancies by expanding education and access to contraception. Unintended pregnancies make up the vast majority of abortions. We must get past the ignorance, fear, and – yes – discrimination against women that has led to restrictions on contraception and age-appropriate education.

Lastly, let's not forget that having an abortion is a by-product of TWO PEOPLE having sex and yet it is solely the woman that is under the magnifying glass. The sexual double standard that is so deeply ingrained in our culture has ultimately created an environment that ensures women are constantly punished for their sexuality.

To close, United States Representative Rosa DeLauro states it clearly: 'Nobody celebrates abortion, and that such decisions are personal ones that should remain between women, their families, and their doctors.'