



**Testimony of Jaime Miracle,
Deputy Director for NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio,
to the Community and Family Advancement Committee
Opposing House Bill 294
November 4, 2015**

Chairman Derickson, Ranking Member Howse and members of the Community and Family Advancement committee, my name is Jaime Miracle. I am the Deputy Director for NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio. I am here to speak in opposition to HB 294 on behalf of our more than 20,000 activists and members in Ohio.

House Bill 294 is misguided and bad public policy for the state of Ohio. Proponents of this bill have stated that cutting tens of thousands of Ohioans off from their reproductive healthcare provider of choice is a good thing, I am here today to talk about why doing so is exactly the wrong thing to do in our state.

First, this attack on Planned Parenthood is a result of several videos, produced by a group founded by anti-abortion extremists. These videos have been proven false by several independent investigations^{1,2}. When did it become OK to base our public policy on ideas that are being promoted by extremists who have spent time in federal prison for attempted fire bombings of abortion clinics³? Just a few weeks ago, one of the board members for the organization behind the videos was denied an entry visa from Australia because the Australian government felt that he could incite violence against abortion providers in their country⁴. It doesn't matter how you feel about abortion, violence against doctors and clinics should never be tolerated. Embracing the talking points and policies of anti-choice extremist groups to create policy is not how we should be doing things in this esteemed building.

Last week you heard testimony from the Charlotte Lozier Institute about how Texas "successfully" defunded Planned Parenthood and more women than ever are now getting care. This couldn't be further from the truth. Taking data from a report published by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission in 2015⁵, there was a 9.1% decrease in the number of women served by the program meaning 18,000 fewer women are getting access to the care they need⁶. In some areas of Texas women served by the

¹ <http://www.cnn.com/2015/08/27/politics/planned-parenthood-videos-congress-report/>

² http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/28/us/abortion-planned-parenthood-videos.html?_r=0

³ <http://rhrealitycheck.org/article/2015/07/17/board-member-behind-planned-parenthood-video-close-ties-abortion-clinic-violence/>

⁴ http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/national_world/2015/10/04/nwr-1004-grb13ns5u-1.html, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2015/10/02/u-s-anti-abortion-activist-troy-newman-to-be-deported-from-australia/>

⁵ Texas Women's Health Program: Savings and Performance Reporting. Published by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, January 2015. <http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/reports/2015/tx-womens-health-program-rider-44-report.pdf>

⁶ Texas Women's Health Program: Savings and Performance Reporting. Published by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, January 2015. <http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/reports/2015/tx-womens-health-program-rider-44-report.pdf>

program decreased by more than 60%⁷. When you look at their data on services provided, the number of claims for contraceptives went from 191,159 in 2011, before they excluded Planned Parenthood from the program to 88,281 in 2013, representing a 54% decrease⁸. All of this was happening while the number of Texas women in need of publicly supported family planning services increased by 34% representing 1.7 million individuals⁹. Additionally this Texas experiment has also not been a good investment for the state. Because the program serves fewer women, in 2013 Texas saw a 67% decline in net savings from family planning¹⁰.

How anyone can look at these numbers and call the Texas experiment with defunding Planned Parenthood a success is beyond my ability to understand. While the need for the program grew by 34%, the program is now serving 18,000 fewer women and saw a 54% decrease in the numbers of contraceptives provided. This is a disaster for the women of Texas, and a disaster that could have been completely avoided if their state had not gone on a witch-hunt attacking the services provided by Planned Parenthood. This is a path that Ohio should not follow.

Something else that has been lost in this conversation is how these programs operate, how the grants are awarded, and how the money is tracked to ensure that the goals of the program are being fulfilled by the grant awardees. All of the programs targeted by this defunding bill are grants awarded based on who is the best organization to provide the services outlined by the program. It isn't that Planned Parenthood is just automatically granted the funds just because they apply. Planned Parenthood and any other provider across the state apply for the grant, the grants are scored at the Ohio Department of Health, and the highest scoring grants in the areas targeted by the program are awarded. If these other providers that the proponents of this bill keep mentioning really are a better place for people to go for care then these providers should apply for the grants and see what happens. The Ohio Senate should not be in the business of telling state agencies that they should be giving money not to the best organization for the job, but one that fits a political agenda of individual politicians.

Once the grants are awarded, budgets must contain specific line items for each expenditure, they must all be deemed "allowable" by the granting agency. In order for any funds to be distributed to the grantee a specific contract must be signed with all parties to be paid, the contract amounts must match what is in the approved budget, and then finally a reimbursement check is issued to the organization. Organizations are not issued a blank check to be used however they feel fit, all funds are tightly controlled.

For these reasons and so many others I urge you to vote no on HB 294. Defunding is bad for Ohio's women, bad for Ohio families, and bad for our state's future.

⁷ Texas Women's Health Program: Savings and Performance Reporting. Published by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, January 2015. <http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/reports/2015/tx-womens-health-program-rider-44-report.pdf>

⁸ Texas Women's Health Program: Savings and Performance Reporting. Published by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, January 2015. <http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/reports/2015/tx-womens-health-program-rider-44-report.pdf>

⁹ <http://www.gutmacher.org/pubs/win/contraceptive-needs-2012.pdf>

¹⁰ Texas Women's Health Program: Savings and Performance Reporting. Published by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, January 2015. <http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/reports/2015/tx-womens-health-program-rider-44-report.pdf>