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**Testimony to the State of Ohio House Committee on Community and Family Advancement
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Chairman Derickson, Vice Chair Ginter, Ranking member Howse, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today on House Bill 294.

My experience with Planned Parenthood started 8 years ago. I was in a relationship where I was emotionally, physically, and sexually abused almost daily. I first went for an STD test because I knew my boyfriend was with other people, but at this point was scared for my life if I stood up to him. The idea in itself was terrifying, I couldn't afford to go to my primary care physician, or wait for an appointment, so I looked up Planned Parenthood and went the next day. The people there were friendly, professional, and most importantly non judgemental. I found out that day that I not only contracted trichomoniasis but was pregnant as well.

The emotions I experienced were beyond overwhelming. The staff at planned parenthood made me feel comfortable, they explained everything and answered all my questions thoroughly, they gave me the appropriate medication to take care of the STI. They also gave me information on places that can help women get out of abusive relationships, which was huge because I felt like that was the first time someone listened to me.

As far as the pregnancy, I knew there was no way I'd bring a child into that environment so I felt abortion was the responsible and right thing to do. I had friends and family say that having a baby will make him change his ways, and I should have it to make him love me. I strongly disagreed with those statements, it didn't make sense to me why people would think it's okay to bring a baby into an unsafe environment. I couldn't do it. If/when I do have kids, it's important to me that they are safe and healthy. This situation was neither.

The day I had my abortion, there were protesters waiting outside with graphic signs, telling me how Jesus doesn't approve of what I'm doing.

As uncomfortable as they made me feel, the staff did a great job easing the stress. It was nothing like the staff at my primary care physician, where they treat you like a number and send you on your way. Even after the procedure, I was given lots of comprehensive information about not only what to expect in the following weeks, but birth control options, and counselors and support groups as well, for the relationship I was in. I'll never forget how relieved I felt. It was because of Planned Parenthood that I was able to gain the courage to get out of that situation. The encouragement and light at the end of the tunnel given to me by Planned Parenthood was something I hadn't received anywhere else, and I thank them everyday for the positive turn my life took after that.

I still go to Planned Parenthood for exams, and just a year ago was able to get an iud with and a follow up appointment with no out of pocket cost. They continue to be a very helpful part of my development and my life, I honestly believe my experience with them saved my life.

The situation I was in happens far more than it should, and women need a place they know they can go to, no matter what. Had I gone to a primary care physician, I would not have gotten the same kind of care. It breaks my heart to think there might be a day where women won't have access to the same care I had. Please vote no on HB294.