

House Community and Family Advancement Committee
The Honorable Nina Turner Testimony
House Bill 294
November 3, 2015

Chairman Derickson, Vice-chair Ginter, ranking member Howse, and members of the Community and Family Advancement Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony in opposition to House Bill 294. I regret that I am not able to testify in person on behalf of women in Ohio who rely on many of the preventative services provided by Planned Parenthood.

During my tenure as an Ohio state Senator, I fought to improve Ohio and the lives of the women and men who call it home. I've seen many policies pushed through the General Assembly. Some that I agree with; and others that I do not.

I vehemently disagree with the move to defund Planned Parenthood and put at risk nearly 80,000 patients in Ohio who received comprehensive health care annually from Planned Parenthood in exchange for political gain.

Make no mistake about it. No matter how supporters of House Bill 294 try to justify these actions, they are wrong and have very real consequences for women who seek Planned Parenthood services 97% of the time for preventative healthcare.

House Bill 294 is bad for Ohio women. It doesn't make sense to know the facts *and* ignore the facts--especially when lives hang in the balance.

As a vital part of Ohio's community, each year Planned Parenthood:

- Provides nearly 155,000 STI tests and more than 14,000 cancer screenings.
- Provides more than 13,000 HIV tests and nearly.
- Conducts 5,000 additional HIV tests in the community each year.
- Provides medically-accurate sex education every year to more than 14,000 people.
- Provides health education and outreach to more than 58,000 women, men, and youth annually.

Moreover, if passed, this legislation would also impact patients throughout the state that receive additional services through Planned Parenthood and other family planning providers that are funded through federal and state programs for breast and cervical cancer screening, infant mortality prevention, and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

But as much as my former colleagues refuse to admit, the elephant in the room taking up much--if not all-- of the oxygen is abortion. Let us not tip toe around this issue. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that abortion is a legal medical procedure that women have the right to choose and it only accounts for 3% of the Planned Parenthood's services. Moreover, no tax dollars are used for this medical procedure.

I encourage members of the House Community and Family Advancement Committee to reference the 122nd General Assembly files where in 1998 the Ohio legislature passed into law a bill prohibiting public funds from being used for abortion procedures.

So once again, it is apparent that this is just another attempt to hunt, harm and endanger women in Ohio and block women from getting critical health care at Planned Parenthood.

The Ohio legislature has a choice. And you must ask yourselves, am I making the right choice for the women in my community that I was elected to serve? Am I putting their needs ahead of my own?

Defunding Planned Parenthood is not only bad health care policy, but bad public policy. Especially in a state where more than half of Planned Parenthood health centers are in rural or medically-underserved areas, meaning that without Planned Parenthood, many patients would literally have nowhere else to turn for essential, preventive reproductive health care.

I implore you to reject this crusade and get back to the business of pushing policies that lift families, communities and businesses in our state. Instead of engaging in this clear political agenda to ban abortion and roll back access to reproductive health care, let's work together to protect Ohio women's right to access the preventative medical care they need and deserve.