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**Testimony to the Community and Family Advancement Committee  
of the Ohio House of Representatives  
Opposition – HB 294  
Nov. 4, 2015**

Thank you, Chairman Derickson, Ranking Minority Member Howse, and members of the House Community and Family Advancement Committee, for hearing my testimony.

I ask you to reject House Bill 294 that would defund Planned Parenthood's critical health care services, and I ask you to reject all restrictions and bans that limit a woman's access to comprehensive reproductive health care, including access to abortion by certified medical providers.

I am Rev. Laura Young, the Executive Director of the Ohio Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (Ohio RCRC). I am an ordained United Methodist minister and a mother of two. Members of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice include The United Methodist Church (UMC General Board of Church and Society, United Methodist Women), the Episcopal Church, the United Church of Christ, the Presbyterian Church (USA), The Unitarian Universalist Association, Reform and Conservative Judaism, Catholics for Choice, and other independent religious organizations.

Life is sacred, and that includes a woman's life as well as that of a potential child. At Ohio RCRC, we and our members are working to bring about reproductive justice. We are working toward a world in which women and men are healthy and every child is wanted, loved, and cared for. The religious communities we represent support birth control, safe and legal abortion, and health care for all.

We offer and encourage others to offer ministries to reduce unintended pregnancies such as comprehensive sexuality education, advocacy in regard to contraception, and we support initiatives that enhance the quality of life for women and girls. In that sense, we are partners with Planned Parenthood. I ask that you continue to support our partner in improving the lives of Ohioans, so each would have the freedom to live into their God-given potential. That requires maintaining our health, and also, being able to determine when and whether to bring a child into the world.

When I was in college, my roommate during my freshman year thought she might be pregnant. I went with her to our local Planned Parenthood, found in the Yellow Pages, and

she got a pregnancy test. She was not pregnant but she did leave there with a prescription for birth control pills and didn't face another unplanned pregnancy in her lifetime. Years later after graduating from college, she became a teacher, married, and had two children, who are now nearly adults. Planned Parenthood helped her live into her God-given potential. Planned Parenthood is a known entity, easy to find, and a necessary provider of health care for women and men.

When I was a pastor in an inner-city church that ministered primarily with people in extreme poverty in Weinland Park here in Columbus, many of the children were born to very young mothers. I saw the cycle of generational poverty that created lives that included a great deal of despair. Good government helps people live better lives. It makes sense to partner with entities that do that, such as Planned Parenthood. Rather than decrease funding, we should be increasing funding in order to have improved health in our citizens and reduce the number of unintended pregnancies in Ohio.

At the foundation of most faith traditions is the love of God and neighbor. Limiting comprehensive reproductive health care is not loving, it is oppressing.

I ask that you reject House Bill 294 and continue to support our partner, Planned Parenthood, in improving the lives of Ohioans.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you.