

Genevieve Ramsington

**Testimony to the State of Ohio Senate Committee on Government Oversight and Reform
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Chairman Coley, Vice Chair Seitz, Ranking member Yuko, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today on House Bill 294

My name is Genevieve Ramsington. I am currently on a path to become a Nurse and eventually a Nurse Practitioner. I was a Health Educator for 4 years for Planned Parenthood Southwest Ohio Region. I have one pregnancy, it was planned. My daughter is 4 years old. Planned Parenthood is a huge part of why I was able to be a healthy sexually active adult without contracting sexually transmitted infections or having an unwanted pregnancy. I'm lucky to have grown up when Planned Parenthood was able to offer health care at a very low cost. I can't take estrogen because I get migraine headaches. So the inexpensive birth control pills available actually put me at a higher risk for stroke. I tried 3 IUD's as all IUD's before I realized my body just won't tolerate IUD's and expels them. Now I have a Nexplanon which is a progestin only rod inserted into the arm that lasts 3 years. It is 99.95% effective. It took me 10 years of my sexually active life to find a birth control that works for me. Planned Parenthood had the expertise to walk me through every birth control option I tried to get one that works for me. Birth control is not a one size fits all. We need organizations like Planned Parenthood that have the expertise to help people make the birth control and infection prevention decisions that work best for them.

As you know, the way Planned Parenthood receives Ohio tax dollars, as well as federal tax dollars given to the state in block grants is through a rigorous competitive application process with other organizations. Each organization proposes how they will use the funds, and they set goals to accomplish. If they have the best proposal they receive the grant. If they don't meet the goals they are less likely to receive grants in the future. The funds that are to be blocked from Planned Parenthood are used for 4 goals. Those grants exist to

- 1.) Decrease unplanned pregnancies
- 2.) Foster safe consensual relationships in our communities
- 3.) Decrease the spread of STI's and HIV
- 4.) Help individuals take personal responsibility for their health and finances. This will help individuals prepare for adulthood, respect their romantic partners, and be responsible for their children and future children.

We cannot detach fetal health during pregnancy from a woman's sexual health before pregnancy. Pregnancy is more likely to be healthy if individuals plan to get pregnant. They take prenatal vitamins while trying to conceive, they are tested and treated for sexually transmitted infections, they quit drinking, smoking and doing drugs before they try to conceive, they are in healthy stable relationships free from violence, and they've waited 15 months after a child is born to try for the next child. We know that all four of these goals also lead to reducing infant mortality, and infertility. Pregnancy prevention is abortion prevention. Pregnancy prevention is infant mortality reduction. Planned Parenthood helps people build the life they want before creating new life. I've heard people in favor of this bill state over and over that Planned Parenthood does not offer pre-natal care. Some in the country do, others do not, but what all Planned Parenthood locations do offer is pre-pregnancy and post pregnancy care. They are the absolute best at it. Pregnancy and STI prevention are vitally important for creating a healthy equitable society.

Some organizations that will still be able to compete for these funds are great, and Planned Parenthood often loses grants to those organizations. Other organizations such as Crisis Pregnancy Centers are toxic for the community. The reason they are currently not getting these grants is because they will not offer and do not offer effective programming. In order to help people be the healthiest versions of themselves we must accept that people have sex for many reasons that have nothing to do with procreation. Crisis Pregnancy Centers focus on Abstinence only education which has been proven not to work. Planned Parenthood offers medically accurate education that has been shown to work in rigorous studies. Crisis Pregnancy Centers don't even offer health care, Planned Parenthood does.

Planned Parenthood educators know the realities and complexity of human sexuality. They hire sexual health experts as well as individuals with a great talent for education. They provide rigorous training for all their employees. They are constantly researching the best ways to reach teens and adults. They meet people where they are. They treat each individual: no matter sexual orientation, gender status, ability, race, or religion with respect. They also have highly trained clinicians who can provide great health care for men, women, and even people that don't identify as either. They value the relationships that are already in place, and involve parents, teachers, and mentors as often as possible in the education of young people.

Blocking Planned Parenthood is not the way to take funds away from Planned Parenthood. Encouraging other organizations to outperform Planned Parenthood is the way to take funds away from Planned Parenthood. We need more organizations to rise to the challenge of offering as effective of programming as Planned Parenthood. Telling the organization that currently has fairly won those grants that they can no longer participate in the competitive environment of Ohio will reduce the number of effective programs, we want more organizations competing. NOT LESS! As a parent I want Planned Parenthood in my children's schools.

For the sake of competition in Ohio, and the 65% of Ohian's that believe Planned Parenthood deserves to be able to compete for Ohio funds. I'm urging you to vote NO on HB 294.