

Opponent Testimony on House Bill 294
Senate Government and Reform Committee
Marian Harris on behalf of the National Council of Jewish Women
Wednesday, January 27, 2016

Good morning, Chairman Coley and Members of the Senate Government and Reform Committee. My name is Marian Harris and I represent the National Council of Jewish Women, Columbus and Cleveland Sections. As an organization of 90,000 members across the country dedicated to the well-being of women, children and families, we strongly oppose House Bill 294 and urge the members of the committee to focus their attention on the real need, the need for safe sex education, access to reproductive health care services, prescription equity and other means to reduce the incidence of abortion in our state. This is what the majority of women and families want and what our state must do if it is serious about reducing abortions and protecting life -- ALL LIFE.

NCJW opposes House Bill 294 because, by blocking any abortion provider from receiving state funds, it blocks funding from the Ohio Department of health for the following programs:

- the Violence Against Women Act,
- the Breast and Cervical Cancer Mortality and Prevention Act,
- the Infertility Prevention Project
- the Minority HIV/AIDS Initiative,
- Infant Mortality Reduction or Infant Vitality Initiatives, and
- the Personal Responsibility Education Program

This bill not only targets Planned Parenthood because they provide abortion care as part of their health care services. These funds would be blocked for use by any hospital, city or county, if they contract with any abortion provider for any reason. Every effort of Planned Parenthood to assist Ohioans through these programs would be stopped if this bill becomes law.

Federal and state laws are already in place to prevent federal and state money to be used for abortions. How can you, in good conscience, defund the above services so ably provided by Planned Parenthood and other entities that also happen to provide legal abortion services?

Cancer screening, domestic violence counseling, infertility services and infant mortality reduction especially when Ohio has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the country. To eliminate programmatic funding addressing these issues to Planned Parenthood makes no sense. They have been providing these services for years to women who would have no other options.

Women need to be able to turn to a trusted health care provider when they need quality reproductive health care. This is exactly what Planned Parenthood does to the women and men who go to them for services. This is why you need to vote no on HB 294.