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**Proponent Testimony for SB145
Senate Judiciary Committee
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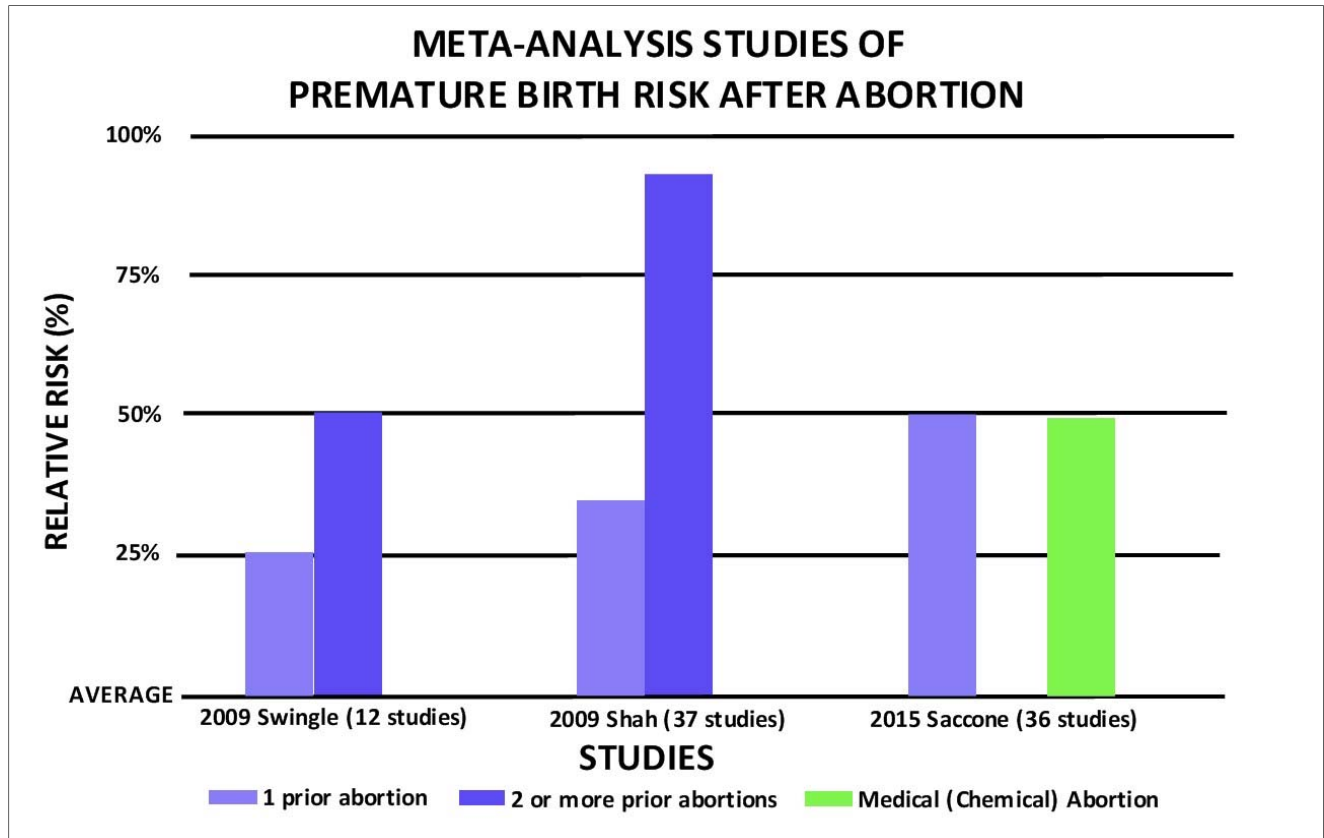
Chairman Bacon, Vice Chair Dolan, Ranking Minority Leader Senator Thomas and committee members:

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of SB145, the Dismemberment Abortion Ban.

Last week during sponsor testimony for this bill, you were subjected to the presence of several women in costumes representing characters from the movie "The Handmaid's Tale." These women were purportedly here to protest that this bill would severely limit women's rights. How sad, and how ironic that they would choose this particular movie to try and make that correlation. "The Handmaid's Tale" movie is a futuristic story about an Old Testament inspired military dictatorship filled with social and religious fanaticism taking over the United States with the subsequent removal of women's rights. The handmaids were a group of women that were kept for reproductive purposes only. The women who showed up here dressed as handmaids seem to forget that we have no such dictatorship here in this country, and that women have all the same rights and freedoms as anyone else. They are also not subjugated to the role of being kept for reproductive purposes. They can make a choice as to whether or not to have a child. That is the key point. A woman can make the choice whether or not to have sex which can result in the conception of a new human life, unlike that of the characters in the movie. This bill does not limit or take away any women's rights. What it does instead, is to insure the lives of the unborn human being who are being denied the right to life.

According to the Guttmacher Institute – originally the research arm of Planned Parenthood – roughly 10% of abortions in the U.S. are performed from 13-20 weeks using the dismemberment procedure. These children suffer by being pulled apart limb by limb until their skulls are crushed, or until some bleed to death and die. Abortion proponents say that the primary reason that these abortions occur in the second trimester is because of medical emergencies to save the life of the mother. This is a total fallacy. Planned Parenthood’s own reports indicated that “36% of women having abortions in the second trimester reported that they needed time to raise money to have the abortion. In addition, 18% of women having abortions in the second trimester reported that worries about the cost of the procedure caused them to take more time to make their decision.” This is hardly a medical emergency.¹

In testimony about a similar dismemberment bill in Maryland, a representative from NARAL (National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League) cited the World Health Organization (WHO) and its 2012 publication, “Safe Abortion: Technical and Policy Guidance for Health Systems (Second Edition).” “According to WHO,” NARAL states, “D&E is the safest and most effective surgical technique for later abortion.” They added that the legislation prevents “a woman’s right to receive abortion care in later stages of pregnancy and interferes with her ability to receive the care that will best safeguard her overall health and future fertility.” What NARAL failed to point out is that this report neglected many worldwide studies ignored by WHO which indicated that having a D&E abortion has been proven to increase the risk of premature birth in future pregnancies. This is most likely because of the potential for damage to the cervix when it is forcibly dilated during a surgical abortion. The chart below^{2, 3, 4, 5} shows the three highly acclaimed published Systematic Reviews with Meta Analysis (SRMA) that conclude the association between surgical abortion and higher rates of premature births in future pregnancies. These studies also consistently show a further increasing risk if a woman has multiple abortions.



These facts are ignored by NARAL, Planned Parenthood and other pro-abortion organizations. They shouldn't be. Premature birth is one of the leading causes of infant mortality, and Ohio ranks as the fifth highest state in the United States in regards to infant mortality rates, especially among the black population. I have attached an editorial opinion article I authored on this topic published by the Akron Beacon Journal on March 8, 2016. Woman are not being told about the risk to subsequent pregnancies when they undergo a surgical abortion. NARAL's testimony in Maryland regarding the safety of dismemberment abortion and future fertility is not based on fact.

It is the public policy of the state of Ohio (*O.R.C. 9.041*) to prefer childbirth over abortion to the extent that is constitutionally permissible. Because of the actions of the United States Supreme Court, it is tragic that we cannot prevent all unborn children from being killed. However, we do have some latitude under federal laws to regulate the practice of abortion, and subsequently save as many lives as

we can. This is NOT an attack on women's rights...it is an effort to protect the innocent lives of those who are given no choice. Let's put this in perspective. A federal judge in Ohio has rejected the state's three-drug lethal injection protocol for capital punishment on the grounds that one of the drugs is not sufficiently humane in its effects. In the opinion, the judge wrote that Ohio's present three-drug protocol will create a 'substantial risk of serious harm' or an 'objectively intolerable risk of harm.' How ironic is it that when someone is legally sentenced to die for their crimes that it must be done in a humane manner, yet an innocent human child who has committed no crime and was not sentenced to die could be killed simply by the desire of its mother, and could be ripped apart and disposed of like trash and that it is legal to do this?

Under federal law, we may not at this point be able to stop the brutal practice of abortion in Ohio completely. Until the time that we can, we believe that this bill will stand up to the courts for the same reason that the partial birth abortion ban did, because dismemberment abortion is brutal and inhumane. I urge you to pass this bill out of committee and then vote for its passage on the Senate floor.

- 1 Brown, Kristi Burton, "3 Common Misconceptions about D&E Abortions Debunked", LiveAction News, February 25, 2016.
- 2 Swingle HM et al. "Abortion and the Risk of Subsequent Preterm Birth", Journal of Reproductive Medicine, 2009
- 3 Shah, P et al. "Induced Termination of Pregnancy and Low Birth Weight and Preterm Birth: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis", BJOG International Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology, 2009.
- 4 Saccone, G et al. ""Prior Uterine Evacuation of Pregnancy as Independent Risk Factor for Preterm Birth: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis," American Journal Of Obstetrics and Gynecology, 2016.
- 5 Chart originally produced by www.hushfilm.com

Racism, infant mortality and abortion

By Denise Leipold and Pastor Dennis Butts

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Ohio has the dubious distinction of being one of the top five states in the country with the highest rates of infant mortality. At a January summit meeting in Akron regarding the impact of racism on infant mortality, it was revealed that two areas of the black community in Akron had the highest rates of infant mortality in the state.

Dr. G. Dante Roulette, an obstetrician/gynecologist from the Summa Health System, discussed the medical reasons, which include prematurity, low birth weight and poor prenatal care as leading causes. Pastor Eugene Norris from Mountain of the Lord Fellowship added that the stress of racism on pregnant black mothers should be considered as a factor as to why so many black babies are dying.

When any child dies, it is a tragedy no matter what the race of that child is. All human life should be highly regarded from the womb to the tomb. In regard to infant mortality rates among black children, there are solid statistics that are often ignored and which many view as racist. These statistics are factual evidence directly correlating to infant mortality rates, and many want to pretend that they do not exist.

The facts being ignored are concerned with abortion. Studies show that one of the risks associated with surgical abortion is the occurrence of prematurity and low birth weight in subsequent pregnancies. In Summit County, blacks are 14.7 percent of the population, yet black women have 41.9 percent of the abortions, which is 2.8 times greater than expected.

These facts are taken directly from U.S. Census data and Ohio Department of Health statistics. These facts were never mentioned at the January summit. Also not mentioned was the fact that Planned Parenthood targets black and low-income communities, yet it does not provide any prenatal care.

Statewide, blacks comprise 12.5 percent of the population, and black women have 40.3 percent of the abortions. When Ohio State University law student Madison Gesiotto used these facts this past December to write a column for the Washington Times about abortion and called it the No. 1 killer of black Americans, she was thoroughly chastised and accused of racism.

Gesiotto was reporting facts, not issuing opinions. Her article was meant to educate the public, yet because the statistics were so alarming, she was accused of making irresponsible statements regarding black women's reproductive health.

While it isn't clear how many infants who died in the first year of life were born to mothers who had prior abortions, the effects of abortion cannot and should not be ignored when studying infant mortality because the abortion rate among black women is so high.

Women of all races need to be educated about the risks associated with abortion. Besides ending the life of the unborn child, abortion can pose many other significant medical risks on future pregnancies.

Instead of looking to place blame or cry racism, we have an opportunity in our communities and churches to stress morals and family values and to avoid behaviors which could lead to an unwanted pregnancy. It's not only the innocent children losing their lives from abortions who should be considered, but the innocent children who may lose their lives from the effects of abortion on infant mortality rates.

Leipold is executive director of Right to Life of Northeast Ohio. The Rev. Butts is pastor at The House of the Lord.