

Kathleen Brinkman
Opponent Testimony
Senate Bill 23
Ohio Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee
Wednesday, February 26, 2019

Chairman Burke, Vice-Chair Huffman, Ranking Minority Member Antonio, and Members of the Committee,

I am Kathleen M. Brinkman. I was born in 1943 in Cincinnati. I received women's reproductive services before the U.S. Supreme Court recognized in 1973 that women have a constitutionally protected right to choose abortion as a medical procedure. I speak to you from my experience

I remember the unfair ways before 1973 that women were denied safe and legal reproductive health care including abortion that they needed to delay giving birth until they were prepared to become parents. I remember how women were denied the right to control the spacing of their pregnancies so that they could care for their children.

My mother was so debilitated by multiple pregnancies in a short period of time that, after delivering my sister and me and suffering through the death of her third child at birth, her health never truly recovered. I never want to see another woman suffer like my mother did. Nor should you.

What I have described is history. We must not repeat it. You face the decision how to vote on SB 23. This bill is so extreme that it denies women the right to 99% safe and constitutionally-protected abortion after about six weeks, even in cases of rape, incest, or when health or life are at risk. It bans legal abortion even before most women know they are pregnant, effectively denying women the decision to use that legal option. SB 23 would subject doctors to prison for using the best medical procedure to save a woman's life or health. SB 23 would return us to my mother's era and the devastating effects women suffered.

I call on each Member of this Committee to uphold the oath you took upon assuming office in the Senate "to defend the Constitution of the United States."

I call upon each of you to vote "NO" on SB 23. Constitutional law has been settled since 1973 that a woman's right to choose abortion as a medical procedure is protected until a fetus is viable. Do not enact a law that clearly violates settled constitutional law, as courts have found wherever such laws have been enacted. Do not waste hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars for legal fees defending this law. Do not demean women by voting to deny them lawful medical services, to deny them the right to make their own medical decisions.

Show courage and uphold your oath of office. Vote "NO" on SB 23.

Sincerely,
Kathleen Brinkman