

Lela Ruth Cooper
Senate Bill 23 – Six-Week Abortion Ban
Opponent Testimony
Ohio Senate Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee
February 26, 201

Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio, and Members of the Ohio Senate Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify in opposition to Senate Bill 23, the dangerous six-week abortion ban.

My name is Lela Ruth Cooper. I'm an RN and have a Masters in Nursing Education.

I believe abortion should be kept safe and legal. No girl or woman wants an abortion. Some girls and women need an abortion. Sometimes it's necessary to save the life and health of the woman. So she can take care of the children she already has.

Physicians for Reproductive Health state:

Abortion care is the only area of medicine where the federal government puts politics and ideology before the patient-doctor relationship, with the intent to criminalize doctors and manipulate patients' health care decisions.

As physicians we use our expertise & experience caring for our patients to advocate for the right to access safe & affordable abortion care in our communities.

Too often the intimate partner of a pregnant woman does not want the financial and other responsibilities of fatherhood. Motor vehicle accidents are the number one cause of death of pregnant women. Following a close second is death of pregnant women by homicide (usually by a boyfriend or husband). A few months ago a 16 year-old said his 17-year-old girlfriend told him she was pregnant, "too late to get an abortion." In Indiana abortion after 20-weeks gestation is illegal. So he "took action." He killed her. If you Google "pregnant women killed by boyfriends" you'll read many stories of this alarming trend.

No 12-year-old girl who is the victim of rape or incest should be forced to continue a pregnancy forced upon her. No 18-year-old or 48-year-old whose contraception method failed should be forced to continue a pregnancy that will drastically change her life.

Women have always had and will always have abortions. We need to keep them safe & legal. Leave the decision about having an abortion up to a woman and her physician.

Many doctors, some who are Catholic, have had patients who they agreed really needed a safe, legal abortion. One Black physician travels in the South performing abortions for poor women who need them. He risks his life to do this, because he is performing a necessary service for these girls and women.

Please protect girls and women in Ohio and vote no on Senate Bill 23. Please keep it safe & legal for them to get an abortion if they need one.

Thank you,
Lela Ruth Cooper