

Kylee Gregg
Senate Bill 23 – Six-Week Abortion Ban
Opponent Testimony
Ohio Senate Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee
February 26, 2019

Good morning Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Huffman, and members of the Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee. Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Kylee Gregg and I am an 18-year-old student and activist living in Toledo. I have resided in Ohio for most all of my life. I am vehemently opposed to SB 23.

Just a few hours from where we stand now, I was a victim of child sex trafficking from ages 10 to 14. I was sold multiple times a day, every day for a total of over 1,500 times. At age 11, while being trafficked, I became pregnant from rape. Because I was so young, and I grew up in a very rural area with notoriously poor sex education, I didn't know really anything about pregnancy or childbirth. What I knew was that I began to feel symptoms I couldn't explain. Nausea, weight gain, pains all over my small body. Another victim of the same trafficking ring was a girl about 13 at the time I was 11. She explained to me that I was likely pregnant. I couldn't wrap my head around it. I didn't know it was possible to be pregnant so young. And I was so used to vaginal bleeding from trauma that I hadn't even realized that I had had my first period yet. The other girl explained to me that she had gone through a pregnancy as well. We figured that I was probably 2 or 3 months along. Far past 6 weeks. She explained to me that I should "get rid of it." Neither of us knew the word abortion. She said that if I kept it, "something bad would happen." I knew she meant that she thought I would die. Yet, she did not force me to do anything. She let me choose. Because she understood that girls like us rarely got to make any choices. We cherished every choice we could make like it was the last one we'd ever have the chance to. Because we never knew when it would be. I chose to abort. She loaded me with alcohol and drugs and made me take cold showers and beat my stomach until I bled heavily and we knew it was over. Years later, after escaping trafficking, I learned that the girl who helped me had overdosed on heroin and nearly died trying to perform another abortion on herself. We both escaped with our lives, but many girls aren't so lucky.

If it were up to anti-choice authors of SB 23, that story really wouldn't have changed. I was past 6 weeks. I had no access to a doctor to determine if my life was in medical danger or not. I was pregnant from rape, but there is no exception for rape or incest in the 6-week ban. They

would've condemned me to the same fate that my traffickers did. Terrified, captive, victimized, and my only help another child who should not have never been in that situation either.

I have C-PTSD from my experiences in sex trafficking. The C stands for Complex and is added to a PTSD diagnosis that comes from prolonged and repeated trauma. Prolonged and repeated are words I could definitely use to describe how it feels to be a woman being antagonized and attacked in a state where bills designed to strip us of our rights and bodily autonomy are constantly being introduced and pushed forward. You, the Ohio state legislature, are supposed to be here to represent, protect, and fight for Ohio citizens. SB 23 betrays that mission. I spent many years of my life having my choices and my rights stolen from me, and now I see my government trying to do the same thing to me once more. I ask you to think of the girls like me who were forced to do awful things to themselves because they could not access safe and legal abortion in their own state. The main idea I hear behind this bill is the supposed protecting of children, but I ask you, was I not a child? Was the girl who overdosed on heroin in an attempt to abort not also a child? This bill would revictimize and retraumatize women and girls who have already been through more than what most of you can imagine. This bill will result in the death of women and girls.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote no on this dangerous bill, SB 23. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I will now take any questions you may have.

Sincerely,
Kylee Gregg