

**Jessica Moore**  
**Opponent Testimony**  
**Senate Bill 23**  
**Ohio Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee**  
**Wednesday, February 26, 2019**

Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio and Members of the Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee,

Thank you for hearing my story and testimony today. My name is Jessica Moore. I am a 33 year old newly-wed living in Cincinnati, Ohio. I am strongly opposed to SB 23.

On May 26<sup>th</sup> 2018 I married a man who is kind, thoughtful, emotionally intelligent and motivated to make the world a better place. Our wedding day was complete with a rainbow sent from heaven solidifying that this man was chosen for me by God. We recently bought a home and are planning a pregnancy later this year (after a trip to Paris).

My life was not always romance and rainbows though.

My first semester away at college I was raped, in my own bed, by another friend's boyfriend. This traumatic event coupled with unresolved trauma from my childhood launched me into a pattern of using drugs and alcohol to cope with my emotions. My confusion about my self-worth led me to choose a man who was manipulative and abusive. Looking back, there were warning signs from the beginning, but I thought we were in love. I was working three jobs to support our habits.

Due to the stress I was experiencing at this time in my life my skin looked horrible. I was exhausted, depressed and my periods were irregular. I woke up most mornings and threw-up due to my intense hangovers. Because I didn't really know when my periods were coming I didn't realize I was "late" until around 6 or 7 weeks. I took the pregnancy test alone in our bathroom.

There I was, a college graduate with 3 part time jobs and a mountain of student loan debt, living on the third floor of a crappy apartment with no parking, pregnant and dependent on alcohol. I was in no shape – physically, emotionally or financially – to take care of myself or another life.

I called to make an appointment for an abortion; their earliest appointment was a week or two out. I took the earliest one. I told my jobs that I was having an ovarian cyst removed and would be off work for two days. I spent those two weeks talking to God. I even went to see the Pastor at my church. I asked her, "would God forgive me?"

After the procedure, I didn't feel pain, or shame. I knew I had done the right thing for me.

I stayed with that man who prided himself on being a con-artist and a thief for a few more years. I endured horrific emotional abuse, endless cheating and elaborate lies, as well as a draining away of all my money.

But eventually I broke free.

I started therapy. I started rebuilding my relationship with my dad. I moved in with a friend until I could get back on my feet and get my own place. I read every book I could to help me figure out why I had chosen him and prevent myself from making poor choices in the future. I worked hard to understand my trauma and the impact it was having on my everyday life. Most recently I celebrated a year of sobriety.

I am so very grateful that he no longer has control over me or another life. I am free to be happy and healthy. I can now provide a good example to a child on how to love and be loved in return.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this extreme and harmful bill. No matter your opinion on abortion, 6 weeks is just too early for most women to even know they are pregnant. I am blessed to have had this option and know that it was the right option for me and my future family.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

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