

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

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 today. My name is Mary Ryan. I am a 62 year old Catholic woman. I'm a product of 12 years of Catholic education and I graduated from Columbus Bishop Hartley High School in 1974. I've been married to my husband for 26 years. I'm the proud mother of a 24 year old son. I am a strong opponent to SB 23.

When I was at Hartley, abortion was illegal in Ohio but legal in New York. I know several young women who went to New York for an abortion. They were young women who came from families with a bit more money than many of us; Bexley girls, not Whitehall girls like me. They'd be gone for a long weekend and come back to school and go on with life. My best friend became pregnant in high school. Her parents decided she would have the baby and give her up for adoption. She missed most of the school year, because at that time you weren't allowed to be at school while pregnant, and she had to attend summer school after graduation in order to graduate. When she returned to school, our principal asked her if she was going to "advocate" getting pregnant to other girls. When we all went to college, she stayed home and worked for a year. I think this was to catch her breath emotionally. She went on to finish college and is married with two beautiful daughters. But her experience her senior year of high school had a detrimental impact on her life. And it was not her choice.

I didn't date much during my teens and twenties and I think that enabled me to have many very good women friends. I've been blessed with so many good friendships. I have accompanied 10 of them to clinics for abortions. These women are now all married, or widowed in one case, and have gone on to have other children, happy marriages and careers.

There are so many women like this in the world. I can promise you that there are women in your life who you admire and who have had abortions that you know nothing about. Women will always have the need for safe, legal, affordable abortions.

And what of myself? I've had pregnancy complications, miscarriages and other reproductive issues. Why am I not telling you my story? Because it is personal and it's really none of your business. Those issues are between me and my doctor. It is not the business of the State of Ohio.

Please try harder to imagine a life other than your own. And keep abortion safe and legal in Ohio. I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful bill.

Sincerely,

Mary Ryan
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