

SB 23 Opponent Testimony  
February 26, 2019

Good afternoon Chairman Burke, Ranking Member Antonio & members of the Senate Health, Human Services & Medicaid Committee. My name is Hannah Servedio. I am a field organizer with NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio, clinic escort, educator & concerned Ohioan – & I oppose SB 23, the heartbeat bill.

Before working for NARAL, I had the incredibly rewarding opportunity to do work in domestic & sexual violence prevention. In fact, it was that work that influenced my decision to work in the field I do now. I took graveyard shifts in shelters, trained volunteers, sat in hospital rooms with survivors & taught well over 5000 students about consent & healthy/unhealthy relationships in Summit County. It is my experience in the schools that brings me here to testify before you today.

I have held in frustration after having a middle school aged girl ask me if she was allowed to say no to her boyfriend who asked her to send him nude pictures. I heard stories from students that made my stomach turn. I also have been moved to tears when watching the recognition light up in their eyes the moment it clicks for them - when they realize have the freedom to advocate for their own bodies.

When listening to proponent testimony during the last session, I heard someone explain that a woman's body is not hers. Above others, that line made me really ponder the perspective the proponents of this bill are coming from. Not only do I fiercely disagree with the archaic point of view that a woman is simply a vessel, but I implore you to consider the damage that passing legislation based on that ideology can do to the progress being made as it relates to consent culture. How can we tell students that saying no is okay, that no one should have the right to pressure them into decisions they do not want to make, that they can do anything with their lives that they choose to do and then tell them that reproductive healthcare access doesn't fall underneath the category of choice?

How can we look survivors in the eye, after control has been taken from them, and say that we know better about how they heal?

I am pro safe, legal & accessible abortion care. I am for people having the ability to decide what is best for themselves & move forward with whatever can help them live authentically. I am for Ohio's confident & educated teenagers growing up into confident and educated adults, knowing their worth and not being afraid to speak up for what they need. I urge you to vote no on SB 23, a piece of dangerous & unconstitutional legislation with little to no exceptions, as it counteracts so much of what we teach. Thank you.