

Dear Chairperson Wilkin, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the Ohio Senate Health Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in opposition to House Bill 598. My name is Elizabeth Offenberg Sauer, but I prefer Beth.

I am here to urge you to vote against Bill 598 that would remove basic healthcare for half our population. Abortion is healthcare. Abortion takes place for so many reasons and those reasons should only be discussed between the doctor and the patient.

Abortion is a critical component of health care that allows people to live free, healthy, and fulfilling lives with dignity and autonomy. Even if the federal law regarding abortion changes at that level, this state must protect the health and equality of all our citizens. 2.5 million Ohioan's health care could be affected and endangered by interfering with the doctor's ability to treat patients suffering from medical conditions that may not be related to their pregnancy. The impact would mainly be felt by those already experiencing barriers in health care...people with low incomes, people who live in rural areas, people lacking reliable transportation, people living in public transport deserts, people who are undocumented, young people, the LGBTQ+ community, people with disabilities and non-white people.

I am 53. I am the mother of an 18-year-old and a 20 year old. Yet, my body is still capable of becoming pregnant.

I am 53. My husband had a vasectomy 10 years ago. But, I can still be raped.

I am 53 and my personal situation in life is not the exact same as any other person in Ohio. Each individual in Ohio should be able to make choices determined by their unique health or life situation without the government intervening or using private healthcare as a political weapon.

I am 53. I choose to wear a mask to protect others' around me not knowing what their health or beliefs are. I can control my own actions to protect and help those around me. I need to be able to protect my own medical needs that affect me.

I am 53 and choose to support other women. I am an escort at Planned Parenthood that greets patients exiting their cars and shields them from the volatile protestors. I also volunteer by helping to find basic needs for new mothers at a Nationwide Children's Hospitals clinic, Teen and Pregnant (TaP). All people in Ohio need to be able to choose their own path and to be supported along the way with dignity.

I am 53 and I have ties to Ohio for the last 150 years. I see the erosion of access to basic health care as a reason for my daughter and son to move elsewhere. My family is fortunate because we can afford to go out of state for **specialized** healthcare. My daughter went to the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota. BUT there is no reason that anyone should have to leave the state lines for basic health care needs. There is also little incentive for new businesses to move to Ohio if their employees will not have full access to basic healthcare throughout their lives: sex education in school, abortions, prenatal care, and post-natal care. This health care should be available to anyone that wants it, no matter what the color of the person's skin, economic situation and gender identity.

I am 53 and grew up in a church that housed the state headquarters for Ohio. I am disappointed that some religious beliefs are honored more than others.

I am 53 and I hope to see abortion care honored, accessible and affordable for rest of my life and generations to come so that we can say Ohioans truly have the best medical community who can legally do what they know is best for individual patients. May our legislators in Ohio honor every person's rights within our borders! Please vote against bill 598.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Beth Sauer