

Hello Chairman Wilkin, Vice-Chair Swearingen, and Ranking Member Brown.

My name is Shivani Deshpande. I am a medical student at Ohio University. I grew up in Dublin, Ohio, and attended The Ohio State University. I am an Ohioan. My testimony today is motivated by a mixture of professional considerations I will need to make as a future physician, but I also speak against HB 598 today as a woman of color and daughter of immigrants. I plan on practicing in Ohio, but I am nervous that HB 598 and bills like it will hinder my ability to practice evidence-based, compassionate medicine in this state. My mom taught me to fight for the oppressed and to always help those in my community. My dad taught me that the best tool I will ever have is my education. It is because of their hard work and sacrifices that I advocate today on behalf of providers and patients, but also because, as a woman of childbearing age, I have envisioned with great trepidation the implications this will have on me as both a future provider and patient.

I was 13 when I first realized how lifesaving quality and accurate medical care can be. In the spring of 2011, my family decided to spend the weekend with us in Ohio. One of my family members had stomach pains and bleeding. Chalking it up to cramps and a particularly rough menstrual period, she decided to venture out for the evening anyways. The pain didn't resolve, and the bleeding got worse. It reached a point where she was unable to leave the bathroom. It was clear we needed to get to a hospital. With a backseat covered in plastic sheets, we rushed to the local ER. The diagnosis? An ectopic pregnancy. The only treatment? Removal of the pregnancy. The alternative to this treatment? Bleeding out and death. Mercifully, she received the appropriate care, and lived through this potentially life-threatening situation. I am thankful that she was able to get the life saving treatment she needed. I am thankful that the physicians at the hospital were able to quickly step in and save her life without fear of prison. Now, if they had taken this trip to visit us in an Ohio where HB 598 is the law, I could have lost a family member. Today, I am speaking out against HB 598 because abortion is healthcare, and - as studies have shown - is extremely safe and lifesaving healthcare. Patients deserve to access physician's full breadth of knowledge and treatment, unfettered by personal bias or political interference.

I have always dreamed of having a career where I could immerse myself within the community. I remember shadowing in my pediatrician's office and admiring the strong relationships she built with her patients' families while exercising her clinical expertise. Now attending medical school in Ohio, I hope to stay in Ohio for my residency and medical practice. My family is here, my community is here. I saw what my parents had to sacrifice to raise children far from their social and family network, I vowed I would stay close to mine. But with the threat of HB 598, myself and my colleagues are beginning to wonder if there is a future for us to practice here. We spend every single day studying and learning how to deliver empathetic and accurate medical care. If abortion is banned, these two principles cannot be fully met.. By the time I am licensed to practice medicine, I will have spent a decade in training—for what? To have learned exactly how to save a pregnant person's life and be unable to do it? I, and so many like me, refuse. While we don't know exactly how much or where, we know that HB 598 will negatively impact Ohio's

physician workforce, and this problem will only grow as we become known nationally as a state where physicians are not respected and reproductive health services are not valued.

While the verbiage of HB 598 is centered around abortion providers, the hidden agenda of this bill will also harm pregnant people in this state. This bill does not take into account how a person became pregnant, which itself can carry trauma. This bill does not take into account the emergent nature of life-threatening pregnancies. This bill does not take into account if a person's financial and social situation can support a child, an area where we should be focusing our attention instead. The United States has one of the highest maternal mortality rates among high income countries. ¹ . Ohio's maternal mortality rates are worse than U.S. averages. The U.S pregnancy related mortality ratio from 2015 to 2017 was 17.1 deaths per 100,000 live births. For Ohio, it was 18.8. ² The maternal mortality rate for Black women in Ohio is even higher than both the national and state, at 29.5. ³ Banning abortion will disproportionately impact populations already facing health disparities, like Black and other people of color, young people, LGBTQ people, and low income individuals. That is terrifying. HB 598 will most certainly increase maternal mortality rates and exacerbate these racial disparities of health. That is shameful.

I am a woman of color and a future physician. Both of these identities bring me here today to highlight the extreme dangers of HB 598. Under HB 598, medical education will be compromised. Those that choose to stay in Ohio will not receive competent training. Others will leave Ohio to seek proper education and the ability to practice accurate medicine. If abortion is banned, Ohio faces a future with undereducated, under experienced healthcare professionals. I ask you, in a state already suffering from high rates of maternal mortality and racial health disparities, to demonstrate leadership and consider the impact this bill will have on your communities, your families, your loved ones. I urge you to vote against HB 598. I would be happy to address any questions the committee members have. Thank you.

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1. https://www.guttmacher.org/state-policy/explore/maternal-mortality-review-committees?qclid=Ci0KCCQjwvqeUBhCBARIsAOdt45YaCxqtcdO1No4SGw1A0jBvPkkE3RYXakh1uG2ETfijlRUVN6PjbZwaAjM3EALw_wcB
 2. <https://odh.ohio.gov/know-our-programs/pregnancy-associated-mortality-review/reports>
 3. https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/wcm/connect/gov/327fd548-7d0c-43ec-9d27-bac48d350150/Racial+Disparities+Snapshot+Final.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CONVERT_TO=url&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE_Z18_M1HGGIK0N0JO00QO9DDDDM3000-327fd548-7d0c-43ec-9d27-bac48d350150-n7bPiTH