



Sarah Inskeep
Opponent Testimony for Senate Bill 157
Ohio Senate Government and Reform Committee
October 6, 2021

Chairman Roegner, Vice-Chair McColley, Ranking Member Craig, and members of the Senate Government and Reform Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify in opposition to Senate Bill 157, also known as the Medical Interference Act.

My name is Sarah Inskeep, and I am the Ohio State Policy and Movement Building Director for URGE: Unite for Reproductive and Gender Equity. URGE is a Reproductive Justice organization powered by young people in Southern and Midwestern states, which includes our great work here in Ohio. On behalf of our staff, young members, and statewide chapters, I ask you to vote no and ultimately stop Senate Bill 157.

Simply put - this legislation is yet another attempt to spread lies and misinformation about abortion care. At its core, Senate Bill 157 has nothing to do with how abortion care truly works nor do the types of medical situations that this legislation purports to address do not happen in health care centers that provide abortion care in Ohio. At its core, this bill is another scare tactic to block people from getting the care they need, and an attempt further criminalize medical professionals that provide this critical care.

It is important to acknowledge and respect people's diverse experiences with both pregnancy and abortion. The decision of whether to continue a pregnancy is personal – and an individual making the decision should be able consult a trusted medical professional without barriers or political interference. People's circumstances and reasoning for their decision to have an abortion or not are unique and be vastly different from one another. People who experience various medical situations with pregnancy such as miscarriage and fetal anomaly deserve to be supported in their health care decisions, regardless of what they are, and must be treated with dignity, compassion, and respect. It's long overdue that politicians accept this reality, promote policy that actually support Ohioans' various circumstances, and stop pushing an anti-abortion agenda that is rooted in false claims and misinformation.

Senate Bill 157 is a recycled effort by anti-abortion politicians and special interest groups like Ohio Right to Life to assert their dangerous, inflammatory rhetoric and attempt to redundantly legislate provisions that federal and state law already address.¹ This bill, like the many others

¹ Vox, *A Republican-backed bill to protect "abortion survivors" just failed. It still matters*, <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2019/2/25/18239964/born-alive-abortion-survivors-protection-2019-sasse>



that are currently pending in the Ohio legislature, all share the same goal ultimately banning all abortion care in the state despite most Ohioans supporting access to abortion.²

Ohioans must have access to have factual information when making decisions about any aspect of their health care – abortion or otherwise. Credited medical organizations like the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American College of Nurse-Midwives, and The Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine have all opposed legislation like Senate Bill 157 because it grossly inserting politicians in-between patients and their medical providers.³

We must trust people to know what is best for themselves, their families, and futures. People must be able to trust their medical professionals to provide them accurate, evidence-based information, and compassionate care when they need it. If passed and enacted, Senate Bill 157 would do the opposite of this. This legislative body should be working to create a safer and healthier Ohio, not a state that is fraught with deep health disparities and lack of safety net supports that are currently present in many of Ohio's low-income, Black, and other communities of color. Our state needs meaningful solutions for addressing Ohio's alarming Black infant and maternal mortality rate and providing young people with comprehensive and culturally competent sexual health education to ensure that all Ohioans have the information and tools needed to make informed decisions about their health care. With that, I urge the members of this committee to vote no Senate Bill 157.

² WOSU Public Media. Majority of Ohio Voters Oppose 'Heartbeat Bill', Support 'Roe v. Wade'.

<https://news.wosu.org/news/2019-07-29/majority-of-ohio-voters-oppose-heartbeat-bill-support-roe-v-wade>

³ VOX. Republicans are Bringing Back a Bill to Protect 'Abortion Survivors'. <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2019/2/25/18239964/born-alive-abortion-survivors-protection-2020-sasse>