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Senate Bill 157 Opponent Testimony
Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee
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Chairman Roegner, Ranking Member Craig, and members of the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee, my name is Jaime Miracle and I am the Deputy Director of NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio. I am here to testify on behalf of our more than 50,000 members and activists against Senate Bill 157, yet another bill based on misinformation and propaganda used to stigmatize abortion providers and the patients they serve.

First, let's make something crystal clear: what proponents claim they are trying to accomplish in Senate Bill 157 is already law. It is already a first-degree felony to not provide care. This bill is a solution in search of a problem and is most certainly not about medicine. It perpetuates myths and lies about abortion care, the individuals who receive this care, and the doctors who care for them. Senate Bill 157 reveals the consistent strategy of anti-abortion legislators, to use lies and propaganda to achieve the goal of pushing abortion completely out of reach for Ohioans. The timing of this hearing and vote also should be noted. Each time this legislature hears testimony or introduces yet another total or near total abortion ban this issue comes up again to try to provide cover for the extremist anti-abortion agenda of this legislative body.

Numerous health care organizations representing thousands of clinicians oppose bills like Senate Bill 157, including the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American College of Nurse Midwives, and the Society of Maternal-Fetal Medicine. These groups oppose these bills because they unnecessarily place politicians between a patient and their doctor and impose felony penalties on medical providers. Additionally, Ohio's version of this bill has no exception for actions taken by the pregnant women and therefore could be used to prosecute pregnant individuals for actions taken during pregnancy.

What kind of cases am I talking about? I'm talking about cases like I experienced with a close friend over 16 years ago. Her pregnancy was complicated from the very beginning, getting the confirmation of pregnancy while in the ER with the first set of complications she faced. By ten weeks gestation she was put on bed rest because the placenta of one of the triplets she was carrying had attached over her cervix and she was at high risk of placental abruption and a deadly hemorrhage. At 18 weeks she in fact did start hemorrhaging and was rushed to the hospital. They were able to stop her preterm labor and bleeding that night, but in the end that was only temporary and a few weeks later, before the point of viability, she was rushed into an ER for an emergency c-section. I'll never forget the rushed, scared 5am call I got from her partner to come to the hospital. The two comforts we all had that day were that although she had lost a lot of blood and was still in crisis, my friend would survive and that in their short time here on earth those babies knew nothing but love and comfort. This bill would change all of that, by taking the decision away from families and their doctors and forcing medical professionals to provide futile care, even when the families did not want it. A doctor should not be having to decide between risking being convicted of a 1st degree felony and providing their patients with the care they need.

Each day, people across Ohio and our nation face the deeply personal decision of whether or not to continue their pregnancies. Their circumstances are as varied as the individuals themselves—some with a healthy desired pregnancy, some with an unplanned pregnancy, and some with severe health conditions that modern medicine simply cannot fix. Instead of respecting the decisions made

by these individuals and acknowledging the complexities of medical decisions, abortion opponents push bills like Senate Bill 157 to distract from their true agenda of pushing all abortion care out of reach.

First, abortion opponents worked to pass laws regulating how abortion is provided through targeted restrictions on abortion providers or TRAP laws. Next, they turned to passing incremental bans on abortion, starting with a post-viability ban; then a 22-week ban; next a method ban, banning the most commonly used abortion procedure in second trimester; then finally their crown jewel, the near total abortion ban, signed into law by Governor DeWine. But they haven't stopped there. There is still a political base to please, so now abortion opponents have moved onto a propaganda campaign—with six million dollars in funding for fake women's health centers in the state budget, bills requiring medical professionals to lie to their patients about the risks of abortion procedures or how a medication abortion works, an abortion trigger ban, and the bill before us today. All of these bills are based on lies and misinformation; and all of them put targets on the back of abortion providers and the patients they serve.

I cannot imagine being a patient, facing a medical crisis during pregnancy, and instead of having my doctor focused on what care is best for me and my individual circumstances and health history, they are concerned about whether the care they have determined is best would result in them going to jail. Patients must be able to trust that their doctors are able to provide the best, compassionate, and individualized care, without interference from members of the Ohio legislature.

Once again, stop the lies, stop the stigma. NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio urges a no vote on Senate Bill 157