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**Proponent Testimony SB 151**  
Ohio Senate Health Committee  
June 9th, 2021

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Senate Health Committee: Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on Senate Bill 151, Emery and Elliot's Law.

Nearly every expectant mother at some point is presented with or reads the book, *What to Expect when You are Expecting*. When carrying a developing baby or babies, in mine or Amanda's case, you experience a myriad of emotions, from excitement about the size of your growing children each week of gestation, from the size of a pea, to a plum, or a precious child that stretches across the length of your palm from head to rump and we often find ourselves overcoming the nausea or lost sleep by day dreaming about meeting our children skin to skin after so carefully and cautiously measuring our caffeine intake, our once heightened heels and the time we may or may not be spending in the gym. As mothers we experience an innate and almost immediate connection to the babies we are carrying and we almost all experience unparalleled joy at the sight an ultrasound or sonogram provides of them sucking their thumb, at the feeling of the very first flutter of babies kicking around trying to make their own space and listening to the beautiful and room stilling sound of their precious heart or hearts beating.

I experienced all of these things through our blessed journey with Josaphine, portions of equal joy and heartbreak with our following two miscarriages and then the full gamut of emotions with our turbulent twin pregnancy. What I will never forget while serving as an expectant mother in the State Legislature, carrying our twin sons, was the day I saw Amanda's video. I saw her heart breaking, her voice not heard, her children not medically served and I was reduced to tears in my Riffe office knowing I was gestationally at the exact same week with my sons as Amanda was with hers when she lost their little lives. I was carrying the roll of

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ultrasounds in my purse from my most recent OB visit. I looked over those images of my children and I couldn't imagine the helplessness she must of felt and I remember calling Adam and asking him what we would do if ever in her case. I knew in those moments, that I hoped to be able to someday stand beside her and to help her fight for children and mothers with stories just like her own. As mothers we hope to help the healing process and part of healing is simply being heard. But Amanda has proven to be a great warrior against the weight of her loss and instead of just being heard she has inspired us every, single, step of the way in advocating for better outcomes and expectations for cases like hers being served. Amanda has taken every mother's greatest fear and fought for every mother's fear of no hope to be stemmed. She may not be able to reverse the course in which she has so heart wrenchingly journeyed but she can help change the odds Ohio's mothers and their young babies born alive experience.

Women are strong and we are prepared to go great lengths, from sleepless nights, heartburn, weight gain, body changes, and not being able to eat our once previously favorite cheese or medium rare steak. What we are not prepared for, nor should any mother ever be, is to experience the trauma, remorse, heartache, unconscionable devastation, and absolute tragedy of our children being born alive and left to die without so much as even minimal medical assistance in the four walls of any hospital room. No mother is prepared to watch her vulnerable children be denied lifesaving assistance, to have herself in a vulnerable state not being allowed a medical transfer or even the basic right to try. No mother is prepared to hear her premature children's breath breathing, see that her children's heart and pulse are pulsating, or have her tiny babies' hands for holding with a doctor nowhere to help her helpless children she delivered alone to be left to die. No mother experiencing such medical shock should be told her children will not be served, that they will be delivered dead and that there is no hope.

No mother in this state, in this country or in this universe should be told that her rights to fight for her children are null and void and that she should instead sit and watch as they perish. I will not live in a world where a woman's voice is nonexistent in the space of her children's life sustaining care. We cannot sit

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silently by as our most vulnerable populations and our most medically fragile are written off before ever even being medically assessed. We live in the greatest country on earth, the same country that Emery and Elliot's father fought to defend and to serve and to assist the least amongst us is our most basic obligation on this civilian side of liberty and justice.

I urge you as the defenders of Ohioans' constitutional and inalienable rights to come alongside this mother who has grieved for her children and promise her that today you will take on your great responsibility and charge to defend life and liberty and the rights to seeking and obtaining happiness and safety in our great state of Ohio. As a former legislator, I can tell you in full confidence and certainty that there has never been and there will never be an issue more worthy of your charge and responsibility than the work that you will do by supporting bills like this bill to protect and defend the most innocent, hurting and helpless constituents placed in your sight. There is not an ounce of political capitol that will matter when you leave this building on your last day, the only thing that will matter will be what you did for those who hurt the most, had the least hope and needed you. I urge you to pass Emery and Elliot's law beside our good friend and even more admirable leader Senator (Doc) Johnson and take it with you as one of the most meaningful measures your name addressed.