



Jessica Koehler

Proponent Testimony on House Bill 149

Health Committee

Wednesday, May 3, 2017

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Antonio, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today on House Bill 149. My name is Jessica Koehler and I am the Director of Legislative Affairs for Ohio Right to Life. Today, I speak on behalf of our Board, our affiliated chapters, and members of our organization in support of House Bill 149.

This bill is a simple and straightforward piece of legislation that does two things. One, it ensures that the sale of aborted unborn baby remains is punished to the same degree as the sale of organs currently is. This would bring it up from a misdemeanor 1 to a felony 3, which is what the law currently is for the sale of human organs.

Two, it closes a loophole that would allow the compensation for the aborted remains of unborn babies. Currently, federal law makes it illegal to sell these remains, but leaves the opportunity for payment for the services surrounding the remains. To put it simply, organizations are not paying for the unborn baby's body parts, but for the shipping and handling.

This practice came to national attention when videos of Planned Parenthood executives discussing the trade of fetal hearts, livers, and lungs went viral in 2015. In the videos, Planned Parenthood directors discussed how certain facilities might be compensated for fetal parts. One medical director discussed the benefit of charging "per item" rather than for a full cadaver. Deborah Nucatola, the top medical director for Planned Parenthood Federation of America, described how a Planned Parenthood facility might justify charging \$60 so that they can "break even" or "do a little better than break even." In addition, the undercover journalist who exposed



these practices has published solid documentation of orders and invoices for fetal body parts, to include liver, thymus, skin, brain, heart, kidney, and pancreas.

This is something that is unacceptable. Whether or not this is currently happening in Ohio, reasonable people would agree that it is a practice we should *prevent* from happening in Ohio. If we can agree that this practice shouldn't be happening *after* birth, then we should also agree that it shouldn't be happening *before* birth.

Daily, Ohio Right to Life seeks to advance the fundamental right to life for every single human person. We do this by proposing new protections that restrict abortions, but we also do this by proposing standards that reflect a culture that honors the dignity of the human person. This legislation falls into the latter category: While it does not restrict abortions, it does propose standards.

Tragically, as I have pointed out, we have seen that there is a loophole in our law that allows for compensation for unborn baby body parts from abortions. There is also a discrepancy in the law, where the sale of organs is given a higher penalty than the sale of the aborted remains of unborn babies. This piece of legislation is a straightforward and commonsense solution to these problems that we should all be able to agree on. Therefore, on behalf of Ohio Right to Life, I respectfully ask that you vote in favor of House Bill 149.