



Testimony of Alana Belle,  
Community Organizer of New Voices Cleveland  
To the Senate Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee  
Opposing House Bill 214  
December 12, 2017

Chairman Burke, Ranking Member Tavares, and members of the Senate Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee, my name is Alana Belle. I am the Community Organizer of New Voices Cleveland. I am here to speak in opposition to H.B. 214 on behalf of our members and supporters in Ohio.

New Voices Cleveland is a branch of New Voices for Reproductive Justice - a reproductive justice organization that is dedicated to the complete health and wellbeing of Black women and girls. We believe that Black women are capable of making the reproductive decisions that are best for themselves and their families; because we believe this, we ask that the state legislature not impede on that decision-making process by limiting access to safe family planning options. **For those reasons, New Voices for Reproductive Justice strongly opposes HB 214.**

This bill is controversial in subject - not because the conversation is centering those living with special needs and their significant contribution to society - but because we are concentrating on the criminalization of healthcare professionals who are able and willing to perform a safe procedure at a time when the ethics of state legislators are more important than a woman's ability to plan her family.

There is an important discussion to be had regarding the systemic and social oppression of those who live with physical and developmental disabilities; one that focuses on the ways in which Ohio policy can be used to increase accessibility and supply funding for the educational, vocational, and social growth of this population; or one that seeks to understand and counteract the negative environmental contributions that can be linked to a host of fetal anomalies. The protection of this particular demographic of people is critical to their ability to survive and thrive but House Bill 214 is not about the protection of people. HB 214 is about the protection of anti-choice value systems that are designed to unconstitutionally challenge Roe v Wade by strategically attacking abortion access in sections.

Because we know judges in other states have vetoed and blocked similar bills, we do not need to discuss the sustainability of this legislation or anti-choice practices but rather concentrate on the sustainability of families who lose the ability control its structure. Every aspect of any child's development rests on the stability of the home they are raised in - eliminating abortion for any reason has the potential to impose severe, negative impacts the pregnant person's emotional, physical, and economic well-being. Because it does not allow women to be in control of their bodies or their futures, HB 214 does not seek to benefit women or their families.



Who does this bill benefit aside from anti-choice legislators? Because we know the turmoil to come if it is passed, we hope that the committee sides with the people and votes “no” on HB 214.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you for your time,  
Alana Belle