

Sponsor Testimony
Senate Bill 101
Health Committee
Chair, Representative Derek Merrin
Tuesday, September 17

Good afternoon, Chairman Merrin, Vice-Chair Manning, Ranking Member Boyd and members of the Health Committee. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to present Senate Bill 101 on behalf of Senator Yuko, who is unable to be here today. Senate Bill 101 would designate May as “Preeclampsia Awareness Month”.

Preeclampsia, sometimes referred to as toxemia or pregnancy-induced hypertension, is a pregnancy complication that can fatally affect both the mother and the fetus. Approximately 5 to 8 percent of pregnancies are affected by preeclampsia. In most cases, symptoms of preeclampsia are not noticeable. It is a rapid, progressive condition characterized by high blood pressure, swelling and protein in the urine. It is typically detected after week 20 of pregnancy.

The cause of preeclampsia is still not fully understood and more research is needed. If undetected, preeclampsia can lead to eclampsia which is one of the top five causes of maternal and infant illness and death, causing a maternal death every 12 minutes. According to the Preeclampsia Foundation, preeclampsia is responsible for approximately 18 percent of all maternal deaths in the U.S., and it causes 15 percent of premature births in industrialized countries. In Ohio, premature birth is the number one cause of newborn death.

Currently, there are no certain preventative measures against preeclampsia. The only effective treatment is delivery. It is the number one reason doctors decide to deliver a baby prematurely. Bringing awareness to this condition is a step towards successful ongoing research and healthy pregnancies.

Chairman Merrin and members of the Committee, I appreciate your attention and consideration of this important issue. I would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.