

Corrine Camero
Opponent Testimony
Senate Bill 23
Ohio Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee
Wednesday, February 26, 2019

Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio and Members of the Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today.

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Corrine Camero. I am a wife and the mother of a kind and hilarious 3-year-old daughter. We have recently moved to Ohio to start my career as a veterinary oncologist in Cincinnati. I am strongly opposed to Senate Bill 23.

When I was 16 years old, I was in love with my high school boyfriend, who I went on to date for 6 years. And at 16 years of age, I became pregnant. With a positive EPT I felt panicky. Keeping this baby would not afford the best life for her, for me, or for my boyfriend. While I did not know what I wanted to do with my life, I knew I wanted to go to college and become a professional. I wanted a career, a partner, and a family in due time. Having a baby at 16 would have been disruptive for everyone involved. Not to mention another blow to my mother, who was struggling with prescription drug addiction and alcoholism. I was scared and felt very alone. I was only 16 and not able to have an abortion without parental consent, however I did not feel that my parents would support me. I made an appointment at an abortion clinic and was referred to a lawyer, as a hearing was necessary to obtain a judicial waiver of parental consent. The hearing took place in a small room with the judge, the lawyer, me, and a video camera. After I completed my explanation for why I was choosing an abortion, the judge was to determine whether she felt that I was mature enough to make that decision for myself. It was agonizing to await the news and I was relieved to find that my abortion was approved before the end of the day. The lawyer reminded me very seriously as we parted ways that abortion is not a means of contraception. I will never forget those words. I was given my first pack of birth control on the day of my abortion and I have faithfully committed to family planning every day since. Abortion is not a form of contraception. It is, however, a healthy and sometimes necessary option. One that I would not have been able to pursue in a state with legislation such as SB23, given the time between finding out I was pregnant and the completion of my hearing.

Abortion is not an easy choice. Although at 16 I knew quickly that it was the right choice for me, it was difficult every step of the way. I am now 37 and a veterinary oncologist, a career which I would not have obtained if I had chosen differently. I now have a wonderful husband with an admirable career as a high school English teacher, the most amazing daughter, and I am 9 weeks pregnant with our second child. There is so much joy in the experience of growing our family with appropriate planning. This joy is tempered by the fear I experience at the potential loss of my reproductive rights.

As we prepare to buy a house and settle down in a city we are growing to love, we are faced with the decision of committing to raising our family in a state that does not value women, our health, or our autonomy. A state that would criminalize me and my doctors if termination of this much wanted pregnancy was deemed the safest and best option for me and my family. Should

a fetal anomaly be detected in my very loved unborn child, I would choose to terminate the pregnancy as an act of love and mercy for my little one. I am fortunate enough to have the financial means to take time off work and to travel to another state to seek the medical care that would I would be denied in Ohio. There are so many others who would not be so fortunate. Women of color, low income women, and women living in rural areas would once again be even further disadvantaged with the passage of this bill. Abortion is a medical procedure, one that is imperative to women's reproductive health and, therefore, women's overall health and wellbeing. Legislative limitations on a medical procedure is nothing short of dangerous.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I will now take any questions you may have.

Sincerely,
Corrine Camero