

Helen Grubb
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. My name is Helen. I am strongly opposed SB 23.

I have lived in Ohio since the age of three. At sixteen I had my first boyfriend. At seventeen he raped me. He was my boyfriend and I didn't know it was rape then, even though he held me down and I wept because it hurt so badly.

At eighteen I left the abusive relationship behind, but could not escape the shadow he had cast over me. At eighteen I began to sleep with any man who would show interest. I thought if I said yes I could undo what had happened. I thought if this time I could consent, let them do what they wanted to my shattered self, it could erase when he forced himself on me. I thought if I said yes no matter what, it couldn't happen again. They lay on me and made themselves welcome in my body while I watched from outside.

At nineteen I became pregnant by a man who insisted on not using a condom. I couldn't say no because I knew if I did he would take it anyway, just like the first had. At nineteen I made a decision. I took a cab to Center for Choice, one of two abortion clinics in Toledo at the time. This clinic has now since closed due to the twenty-one attacks on abortion access in Ohio since 2011.

But at 19, when I arrived at the clinic, the protesters shoved pamphlets at me as I walked into the building. They told me I was a murderer and that I would go to hell if I went through with it. The clinic gave me an ultrasound and another pamphlet with the stages of pregnancy. Every illustration showed a complete little human, even the first one where it's just a supposed to be a bunch of cells. I was informed that they legally were forced to give me this information even though it had medical inaccuracies. This is one of the many unnecessary Targeted Regulations of Abortion Providers laws in Ohio.

When I chose to get an abortion, the pill was still a fairly new procedure in the United States. I was much further along than 6 weeks when I found out I was pregnant, because I was also just past the 10 week cut off to use the abortion pill. Had SB 23 been in place when I terminated my pregnancy, I once again would have been facing a situation where I was not able to make my own decisions for me own body.

The doctor who performed my abortion was male. I saw the face of my rapist. I lay there on the table with my legs open as he penetrated me with a thin tube and used the vacuum to suck the tissue from my uterus. It was painful and I bled just as I had bled when my rapist had forced his body inside mine. This time though the decision was mine. This time I took control of my body away from the others and picked what was right for me.

At nineteen I had an abortion. At nineteen I made a choice. I don't want what happened to me to happen to other women. I don't want girls to grow up and believe their bodies are not their own. I urge you to vote no on SB 23 so others are not faced with other people taking control of their bodies. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I will now take questions.

Sincerely,
Helen Grubb