

Testimony of Elizabeth “Libby” Viars, RN Labor & Delivery / High Risk OB Nurse

Proponent of S.B. 23, the Heartbeat Bill

Ohio Health, Human Services & Medicaid Committee, March 6, 2019

Thank you Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio & members of the committee:

I was born and raised in Ohio but I am currently working in a neighboring state. I work in the Labor & Delivery unit and the High Risk Pregnancy department of a busy hospital, alongside a Level 4 NICU.

I work daily with very sick moms who have numerous, severe health problems that complicate their pregnancies, but I've never one time seen a reason to abort a baby to save the mother. Even though S.B. 23 would allow an abortion to save the mother's life, I want you to know this almost never happens. I've never seen a case of it.

Recently we had an 18-week baby born after we were unable to stop premature labor. It was a girl, and as I held and swaddled her, she moved her tiny arms and legs. She lived less than an hour but she was a living person, worthy of protection, and her life mattered.

A few weeks ago, we had a 14-week miscarried baby. It was a boy and as I held him, I saw his 10 fingers, 10 toes, even his little fingernails and toenails. He was perfect in every way, just too tiny to survive outside the womb. At 14 weeks, he was a person.

Every week I see many bedside ultrasounds of very premature babies. I watch as they wave, kick and flip around on the ultrasound screen, and parents really get a kick out of seeing their unborn baby with the hiccups!

As someone who daily sees life inside the womb, I hope you will pass S.B. 23, the Heartbeat Bill. If everyone could see what I see at work each day, our society would have more respect for the lives of unborn babies.

Thank you for allowing me to share.

--Elizabeth “Libby” Viars, RN