



Jessica Warner

Proponent Testimony on Senate Bill 208

Senate Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee

Tuesday, October 15, 2019

Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today on Senate Bill 208. My name is Jessica Warner and I am the Director of Legislative Affairs for Ohio Right to Life. Today, I speak on behalf of our board, affiliated chapters, and statewide membership in support of Senate Bill 208, the Born Alive Infant Protection Act.

Just this past spring we testified in this committee in support of Senate Resolution 41, which urged congress to pass the federal Born Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act. That bill has yet to be allowed onto the floor of Congress for a vote, even after it has been requested over 80 times by over 200 congressmen and women. We appreciate that the Ohio Senate voted unanimously to support that resolution, but as we see that there has been no forward progress in Congress, we are here today to request that this legislation be passed so that at least Ohio can take action to protect these young lives.

Senate Bill 208 would require a report to be created by the Ohio Department of Health for the abortionist to file if a baby is born alive during a botched abortion. It would also require that the doctors perform lifesaving treatment to the baby, as they would to an infant born alive in any other situation.

We see the need for this legislation demonstrated in many ways. First, by the numbers that have been collected by the seven other states that have passed similar legislation. Minnesota reported five babies born alive following a failed abortion in 2016, and Florida reported eleven in 2017. We also see the need for the Born-Alive Infant Protection Act in stories like this from Florida,



where the AP reported that a baby at 23 weeks gestation survived an abortion procedure only to be thrown in the trash and left to die by the doctor. Or when we look at the abortionist Kermit Gosnell of Pennsylvania who was convicted of three counts of first-degree murder after it was revealed that he had been killing newborn babies born alive following an attempted abortion by cutting their spinal cords with scissors. Finally, we see the need when we look at reports from the CDC who has collected data from 2003-2014 on the 588 babies who were born alive after induced abortions, documenting how long they lived in minutes, hours, and even days.

Sadly, these and many other examples across the country reveal that these laws are needed. We should all be able to agree that regardless of the circumstance of a baby's birth, once it is born, our very humanity requires that we do everything we can to protect it.

I would ask that you pay special attention to the written testimony today that was sent in by OBGYNs and other physicians that couldn't be here this afternoon. They have lent their medical expertise to attest to the pressing need of this legislation.

In the end, this is about protecting defenseless babies who have defied death. These children are being forgotten and, quite literally, disposed of as trash. This isn't about abortion; this is about basic human decency.

On behalf of Ohio Right to Life, I ask that you vote in favor of Senate Bill 208, to ensure that infants are given the best chance at life in Ohio.