



Sarah Inskeep
Opponent Testimony for Senate for Senate Bill 208
Ohio Senate Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee
Tuesday, November 5, 2019

Chairman Burke, Vice-Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee thank you for allowing me to testify in opposition to Senate Bill 208.

My name is Sarah Inskeep and I am the Ohio State Policy and Movement Building Director for URGE: Unite for Reproductive and Gender Equity. URGE is a reproductive justice organization powered by young people in Southern and Midwestern states, including Ohio. On behalf of our staff, young members, and statewide chapters I humbly ask you to stop Senate Bill 208.

Simply put – this legislation is yet another attempt to spread lies and misinformation about abortion care. It is clear that Senate Bill 208 is a part of a larger strategy to make abortion inaccessible in Ohio by shaming people who have made the decision to have an abortion and threatening steep criminal penalties to the doctors who provide them with this critical care.

It is important to acknowledge and hold people’s diverse experiences with both pregnancy and abortion. The decision of whether or not to continue a pregnancy is personal - and the person making the decision should be able to consult with a trusted medical professional without political interference. An individual’s circumstances and reasoning for their decision are unique and be vastly different from one another. It’s long overdue that politicians acknowledge and actually support Ohioans’ varied circumstances and stop pushing an extreme anti-abortion agenda that has no basis in medical reality.

Senate Bill 208 is just the latest effort by anti-abortion extremists in their dangerous misinformation campaign. This bill is among a string of attacks and other measures pending in the Ohio Legislature that are rooted in stigma and inflammatory language. For example, Senator Lehner’s Senate Bill 155, which would require medical professionals to tell their patients that an unproven and experimental procedure that can “reverse” a medical abortion, and State Representative Becker’s House Bill 182 that claims that you can move an ectopic pregnancy into a uterus and would ban abortion coverage from private insurance plans¹.

In addition to these blatantly inaccurate bills, anti-abortion politicians have siphoned state resources to fund fake clinics, otherwise known as crisis pregnancy centers. Earlier this year, Governor Mike DeWine signed the biennium operating budget, which included a reckless \$7.5M funding allocation for fake clinics. To be clear – these clinics are not licensed health care facilities and intentionally lie and deceive young people seeking abortion care. Shortly thereafter, House Representative Ginther introduced House Bill 297, which would give a 50%



tax credit for those who make donations these fake clinics. The common denominator in all of the these bills is that they are based in lies, misinformation, and share the goal of pushing abortion care out of reach for people in Ohio.

We must trust people to know what is best for themselves, their families, and futures. People must be able to trust their medical professionals to provide them accurate, evidence based information, and compassionate care. Senate Bill 208 would do none of this. I ask you to vote no on Senate Bill 208.

ⁱ The Washington Post, *A sponsor of an Ohio abortion bill thinks you can reimplant ectopic pregnancies. You can't*, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2019/05/10/sponsor-an-ohio-abortion-bill-thinks-you-can-reimplant-ectopic-pregnancies-you-cant/>