



Testimony in Opposition to HB 487 Language Which Would Defund Planned Parenthood

Submitted to: Ohio House of Representatives
House Finance and Appropriations Committee

Submitted by: Angela Shyrigh
Member, Board of Directors
Women Have Options

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Chairman Amstutz and members of the committee, I am grateful for the opportunity to testify in opposition to the language included in House Bill 487 which would de-fund Planned Parenthood. My name is Angie Shyrigh and I am on the board of Women Have Options, an independent abortion fund here in Ohio. We provide financial assistance to low income women so they may afford their reproductive choices. Women Have Options provides funding to Planned Parenthood for family planning services such as contraception, including emergency contraception. The partnership we have with Planned Parenthood is valuable in preventing unintended pregnancies and the need for abortion.

Planned Parenthood provides STI/STD testing and treatment, contraception, cancer screening and prevention, pregnancy tests, prenatal services, and lastly, abortion procedures which comprise 3% of the total services. Through preventive care programs, Planned Parenthood also prevents more than 584,000 unintended pregnancies each year.

When I was a woman in my early 20s living on my own, I worked a full-time job for pennies above minimum wage, a job which provided no health benefits. Through that uninsured period of time, I relied on Planned Parenthood for well woman exams. I viewed these check-ups as an important part of being an independent, healthy woman. I viewed this as an adult responsibility to myself, my family and my community. I could not have otherwise afforded the level of care and attention Planned Parenthood provided to me.

In this struggling economy and a high unemployment rate in Ohio (7.6% in February 2012 according to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services), we are looking to you, our leaders for help. Instead we are fighting attempt after attempt to restrict access to basic reproductive healthcare which, in seeking to defund the largest provider of reproductive healthcare in the country, which is exactly what the language in this bill endeavors to do.

It is our belief the inclusion of this de-funding language in House Bill 487 would have a detrimental effect on the health of Ohio citizens, and in particular our low income citizens. We ask that this language be removed from the budget bill.