

Chairman White and members of the House Health Committee, good afternoon. My name is Debbie Stacy and I am the executive director of the Center for Moral Clarity. CMC is a national grassroots organization formed to defend truth, shape culture and advocate for issues of righteousness and justice.

On behalf of our founder and president, Pastor Rod Parsley, thank you for the invitation to come before you today to address House Bill 228. Pastor Parsley is a strong supporter of this bill. He regrets he was unable to be with you in person today to speak on behalf of this important proposal to end the horrific practice of abortion in Ohio. With the chair's permission I'd like to offer Pastor Parsley's statement in support of the bill:

"I want to thank the House Health Committee for taking the courageous step of holding hearings on House Bill 228. I would urge the General Assembly to pass this bill as a challenge to the ultimate example of judicial activism, the U.S. Supreme Court's 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision. It's past time for the people of this nation to correct this terrible injustice, and it's appropriate for Ohio to take a leading role, just as we were at the forefront of the crucial moral issue of marriage in 2004.

"As a pastor, I see the horrifying effects of abortion every day. Over the 30 years of my ministry, I have seen abortion go from a rare occurrence to a frequently used form of birth control. And, while every abortion results in the death of one person – the unborn baby – its effects also include wounding at least one other, a woman who's been convinced that the killing of her child is an acceptable solution to an unplanned pregnancy. These women are shattered casualties of the culture war. Concern for these precious women's mental and emotional health is an important reason why Ohio should ban the practice of abortion.

"While it's vital to note that ending abortion in Ohio would save the lives of more than 30,000 babies every year, it's also important to realize that the emotional health of women can only benefit when this self-destructive act becomes a thing of the past in our great state. Instinctively we all know that people matter more than anything else, and ending the barbaric killing of unborn babies is consistent with a culture that values life.

"I urge the General Assembly's swift consideration of House Bill 228, beginning with its recommendation by the House Health Committee."

Chairman White, members of the committee, I appear before you today as the executive director of a grassroots organization, representing thousands of Ohioans who believe that life is

always worth saving and worth defending. Last month, the Center for Moral Clarity filed an amicus brief with the U.S. Supreme Court for its consideration as it prepares this fall to rule on the constitutionality of the Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003. I am also the founder and president of a women's clinic, whose very existence is devoted to providing women with the truth about their pregnancies and alternatives to abortion. I am a pastor's wife who has sat and cried and prayed with countless women who have mourned the lives they helped to destroy by participating in an abortion – sometimes decades after the abortion occurred.

But none of those titles or positions matter much to me. I come before you today primarily as a mother of an 11-year-old son and a 7-year-old daughter. Like many moms, I am doing everything I can to prepare my children for the world. I'm also passionate about making the world a better place for my children. For this state or any other to permit abortion to take place undermines one of the primary lessons I'm trying to teach them, and that mothers all across Ohio seek to teach their children – that people matter more than anything else.

It is difficult for any parent in this state to tell his or her children that people matter when 18 percent of all pregnancies – nearly one in five – ended in abortion in Ohio between 1991 and 2001. Some of you on the committee are from Hamilton County, where the abortion rate during that period was 21.4 percent. Representative Brown is from Lucas County, where the rate was 21.2 percent. Chairman White is from Montgomery County, where the abortion rate was 22.7 percent. Some of you represent districts in Cuyahoga County, where the numbers are even higher – 30.6 percent of all pregnancies, more than three out of every 10, ended in abortion for the 10-year period of 1991-2001.

Here's another perspective on abortion. The Ohio Department of Health reports that in 2003 alone, more than 35,000 abortions took place in the state of Ohio. That's roughly the same number as the population of Gahanna in Franklin County; or Stow, in Summit County; or Westlake, in Cuyahoga County. Imagine one of those cities being wiped off the map every year and you have a good idea of the effect abortion plays in this state.

As a mother the easy availability of abortion goes against everything I want my children to learn about the value of human life. We shouldn't be surprised when we read news reports about students killing themselves or others or participating in other self-destructive behavior such as drug use or alcohol abuse. Abortion teaches them that life is easily expendable, and not worth protecting.

Chairman White, members of the committee, there are powerful forces in the pro-abortion camp that will tell you that abortion is simply a fact of life – that women must have what they call “reproductive freedom,” which is what they euphemistically call the right to kill unborn babies. I would urge you to consider both the source and the motivation of these assertions.

Earlier this month, the nation’s largest provider of abortions, Planned Parenthood, released its financial report for the period of July 1, 2004, through June 30, 2005. The report confirms that abortion is big business in this nation, so it’s logical to conclude that part of their opposition to this law is economic, no matter what they may claim. Planned Parenthood is an \$882 million business that made \$63 million in profits over the period covered by this financial report. The report shows that more than a quarter of a million babies were killed in their clinics. Planned Parenthood was responsible for nearly 20 percent of all abortions in the United States in 2004.

Planned Parenthood is coming off a tremendously successful year financially – reporting record profits. Of course they want abortion to continue to be legal in Ohio; you simply must analyze anything they or any other abortion advocate says in that light.

Chairman White, members of the committee, I would suggest to you that you don’t have to accept the notion that abortion will always be a fact of life in our society. It’s true that House Bill 228 is a direct challenge to *Roe v. Wade*. I’m here to tell you today that such a challenge is inevitable, and that it is destined to succeed because it is an affront to the prerogative of the states to defend human life as it sees fit. I urge you to pass this bill and put Ohio on record that in this state, people matter more than anything else – even and especially the most defenseless of all people - unborn babies.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.