

**TESTIMONY: *House Bills 4949 – 4959***  
**Passage of the Reproductive Health Act**

**House Health Policy Committee**  
**September 14, 2023**

To Chair Rogers, Vice Chair Whitsett, Vice Chair VanderWall, and the esteemed Members of the House Health Policy Committee,

My name is Melissa Bayne and I am a practicing OB/GYN in rural west Michigan. Thank you to Chair Julie Rogers and members of this committee for the opportunity to share my support as a practicing physician for the Reproductive Health Act.

I have practiced in my community for 17 years. Before that, I served in a clinical setting for a medical entity that prohibited abortions. One night, I was on duty when a patient came in with a serious pregnancy complication. This patient was bleeding profusely. Her vital organs were shutting down. The only way to save her life was to perform an immediate, emergency abortion.

Because we could not perform this common, safe, and medically necessary procedure – a procedure that is a normal part of health care and supported by professional medical organizations from the American Medical Association to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecology – my patient died in my arms that night. Because I was prevented from doing my job as a doctor and using all my skills and evidence-based medical training, a young woman needlessly lost her life.

My story is not unique. Every day, my colleagues in medicine are held back from providing the full range of care because of medically unnecessary, politically motivated red tape. The only aim of these unnecessary restrictions is to stop patients from exercising their medical freedom to choose the care that's right for them.

During medical emergencies, minutes matter. When a patient who needs an emergency abortion is forced to travel great distances, that delay puts their life at risk. When a patient has to suffer through a medically unnecessary and potentially dangerous waiting period, that delay puts their life at risk. Seconds can be the difference between surviving a life-threatening pregnancy complication, and hemorrhagic and septic shock, which can be fatal.

Michigan's Reproductive Health Act is an important step toward removing barriers to health care that can put patients' lives at risk. The Reproductive Health Act is an important step toward giving Michigan women the full medical freedom they deserve, and that an overwhelming majority of Michigan voters want them to have.

To the esteemed members of this committee and to all Michigan legislators, you hold patients' lives in your hands. Regardless of the circumstances, patients deserve to be able to access the care they need, when they need it.

I urge you to pass the Reproductive Health Act. Thank you.

Dr. Melissa Bayne, OB/GYN in rural west Michigan