



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF OHIO

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**Opponent Testimony on HB 248
Before the House Health Committee
Presented by Carrie Davis on behalf of the
League of Women Voters of Ohio
November 20, 2014**

Chairman Watchmann, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present written testimony on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Ohio.

The League of Women Voters strongly supports the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices. Reproductive health choices are a private matter, not government business.

We strongly oppose HB 248 because it violates the right of individual privacy to make personal reproductive health choices. This bill will ban virtually all abortions as early as six weeks into a pregnancy, whether or not a woman is even aware that she is pregnant. Further, it lacks any exception for rape, incest, or dangerous fetal anomalies.

Reproductive health is one of the most private aspects of one's life. It is a personal and private matter. It is not the government's place to obstruct such a fundamental individual right.

Furthermore, we are deeply troubled by the timing and haste with which this hearing was announced, providing the public with little if any opportunity to weigh in on such a controversial issue. The League was founded on principles of good government and participatory democracy.

Good government is deliberative, public, and listens to all sides before reaching a reasoned decision. Those principles are wholly absent in what has become known as "gotcha" hearings, such as this - where a hearing is announced late in the day, with virtually no opportunity for the public to even be aware of the hearing, let alone time to comment before the bill is rushed through. It is almost as if the committee is seeking to discourage public participation and a truly deliberative process.

We urge this Committee and the Ohio House of Representatives to reject HB 248 and, in the future, to assure that any measures being considered have ample time for public comment and participation.

The League of Women Voters of Ohio, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.