



Planned Parenthood® Affiliates of Ohio

206 East State Street • Columbus, Ohio 43215 • 614/224-0761 • 614/224-2420 (fax) • www.ppao.org

PRESS CONFERENCE REMARKS **REGARDING REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS AWARENESS WEEK**

My name is Gary Dougherty and I am the State Legislative Director of Planned Parenthood Affiliates of Ohio, the public policy arm of the three Planned Parenthood affiliates providing reproductive and preventive health care to women, men, and teens throughout the state.

First of all, I want to thank Senator Tavares and Representative Antonio for introducing these resolutions recognizing this week as Reproductive Rights Awareness Week.

This past Sunday marked the 39th anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision. This landmark ruling guaranteed that the right to privacy in the U.S. Constitution protects the right of a woman to choose whether to continue a pregnancy or to have a safe and legal abortion.

Unfortunately, here in Ohio, we are coming off a year during which an unprecedented number of bills that can only be described as anti-women's health have been introduced and enacted into law.

Be assured, we are watching – women and men – and we are drawing a line in the sand to say enough is enough.

The truth is, no matter what they call themselves or where they align politically, a majority of Americans respect the decision each woman must make about her own pregnancy and oppose efforts to overturn *Roe*. That hasn't changed in the last four decades.

I am proud to represent Planned Parenthood here today as we support the recognition of this as Reproductive Rights Awareness Week. For eight decades, Planned Parenthood has provided Ohioans with access to quality, preventive reproductive health services and education to prevent unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. In fact, one in five women have turned to Planned Parenthood at some time in their lives for professional, non-judgmental and confidential health care.

In these tough economic times, more Ohio women than ever need access to essential health care services.

Planned Parenthood is proud to stand with Senator Tavares and Representative Antonio and others here today to support Reproductive Rights Awareness Week and the public awareness, conversation, and support for reproductive rights and justice that it will encourage.