

**LWV Ohio Statehouse Day -- April 9, 2014**

**LWVO Lobbyist Report**

**REPRODUCTIVE CHOICE**

**Anne Smead**

The Choice issue has mostly moved out of the legislative arena now. Yes, Sen. Kris Jordan has introduced the so-called "heartbeat bill" which opponents often refer to as the "heartless bill", where abortions cannot be performed after 6 weeks of pregnancy, and there are no exceptions for rape, incest or health of the mother, but we are not expecting any action soon. Please keep in the back of your mind, however, that things may heat up in Lane Duck, after the Nov. elections, so we will have to be ready then.

In the meanwhile, provisions in the state budget from last summer decreased funding for Planned Parenthood, instead increased funding for Crisis Pregnancy Centers. These centers do not provide abortions, but give false information about the procedure. For example, "abortion causes breast cancer; abortion leads to a higher risk of mental disorder, or drug use". And most troubling, made transfer agreements a requirement of law, rather than a department rule, and banned agreements with public hospitals. This has caused several clinics to close.

Toledo has already lost one clinic, and now Capital Care Network is challenging its license revocation by the Ohio Department of Health. Capital Care has a transfer agreement with the University of Michigan Health System in Ann Arbor, but that was rejected by ODH.

Besides trying to foster a perception of clinics as "abortion mills", where patients will somehow need emergency treatment just by going there, it is a moot point. Under federal law, hospitals cannot turn away ER patients.

In Feb. Dr. Ted Wymyslo, a friend of choice, resigned from his position as head of the Ohio Department of Health. Gov. Kasich has the authority to fill this position. Over a year ago, Kasich appointed Michael Gonidakis, President of Right-to-Life, to the State Medical Board.

We will continue to watch developments in other states, and await the U.S. Supreme Court decision about employers being exempt from offering certain kinds of birth control in health plans.