



**Representative Emilia Strong Sykes**  
**Minority Leader**  
**34<sup>th</sup> House District**

December 11, 2020

Governor Mike DeWine  
Vern Riffe Center  
77 S. High St., 30<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Governor DeWine:

I write to strongly encourage you to veto Senate Bill 27, legislation that would require fetal remains from surgical abortions to be buried or cremated. Not only will the constitutionality of the bill be likely challenged, wasting resources that the state will desperately need, but it is also a blatant attempt to police women's behavior and shatter their privacy.

We need to trust women to make such very personal decisions, not politicians. This bill is unnecessary as there is already an option for women who choose to bury or cremate fetal remains. The financial and emotional stress that Senate Bill 27 will impose on women represents an extraordinary government intrusion that goes against many of the small government principles that you have stood for over the many decades of your career.

While politics may be the ultimate deciding factor on whether this bill becomes law, rather than the needs of Ohio's women, I encourage you to pause and reflect on what lines this specific piece of legislation would cross. For example, during the committee process, a rabbi testified that the bill violated Jewish laws, practices, and values. I know you agree all Americans deserve the right to religious freedom granted in the First Amendment. Forcing Jewish women or others to participate in a ritual they believe violates their religious beliefs is very un-American and just plain wrong.

Furthermore, this legislation is inconsistent and the only real purpose is to impose harm on women and agency. Fertility clinics, which regularly dispose of embryos, are not included. Nor does it apply to miscarriages, medically-induced abortions, or stillbirths. This bill is an undue burden on women, and women alone will bear the brunt of this legislation.

Senate Bill 27 is an unnecessary, unconstitutional piece of legislation that chips away at the privacy and religious freedom of every woman in this state. At a time where we needed the legislature to convene in order to protect the well-being of all Ohioans, this bill instead attacks Ohio's women. The legislature failed to listen to women during the committee process, even though they were joined by members of the medical community and religious leaders. Do not let their voices remain unheard.

Again, I respectfully urge you to immediately veto Senate Bill 27 and send a message to the legislature that Ohioans need their elected officials to work for them, not attack them.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emilia Sykes", written over a faint circular stamp.

**Emilia Sykes**  
Minority Leader  
Ohio House District 34

