

# Time to move past culture wars and support women and families

## Your Turn

Catholic Sisters of Charity, Peace, Mercy and Hope  
Guest columnist

In our diverse ministries as Catholic sisters across Ohio, we are inspired by the Gospels and Catholic teaching to honor the sacred image of God in all people. By caring for the sick, welcoming immigrants, protecting the environment – and also lobbying those in power to change systems that perpetuate injustice – we seek to build a culture that serves the common good and that creates safe and healthy communities where families can thrive. We see up close every day how people are forced into agonizing choices in a society where the lack of quality health care,

sexual violence, poverty wages for workers and the high cost of child care all impact how women make difficult decisions about their reproductive lives.

We are deeply concerned that recent legal and legislative efforts to criminalize abortion and block access to reproductive care threaten the lives and dignity of women. Abortion bans in Ohio and other states have made high-risk pregnancies even more dangerous. Black and Hispanic women, who often struggle to access quality medical care and suffer from higher maternal mortality rates, are disproportionately impacted by these punitive laws. Sadly, many politicians and religious leaders often promote these policies as “pro-life.”

If Ohio lawmakers and elected offi-

cials across the country truly care about being pro-life, they should consider how these punitive laws hurt women and fail to address the complexity involved in how women use discernment to make reproductive decisions. We encourage legislators across the country to join us in building a culture of human flourishing and pass legislation that provides the care and resources people need to thrive. This includes ensuring that women have access to quality pre- and postnatal health care, establishing paid parental leave laws and affordable child care programs, implementing child tax credits that have proven to reduce child poverty and requiring living wages for workers.

It’s time to finally move past the divi-

sive culture wars over abortion and come together to do the hard work of supporting women and families.

*This column is co-authored by Sister Carren Herring, Sister of Mercy Cincinnati; Sister Jean Miller, Sister of Charity of Cincinnati; Sister Margie Efke, Ursuline Sister of Cincinnati; Sister Carol Jean Willie, Sister of Charity of Cincinnati; Sister Gemma Doll, Dominican Sister of Peace Columbus; Sister Fran Repka, Sister of Mercy Cincinnati; Sister Kathleen Hebbler, Dominican Sister of Hope Cincinnati; Sister Patricia Gardner, Franciscan Sister Sylvania; Sister Roberta Miller, Dominican Sister of Peace Columbus; and Sister Nancy Bramlage, Sister of Charity of Cincinnati.*