

ADVOCACY

People First of Toledo Monthly Newsletter



**People First
of
Toledo**



Reproductive Rights

By Quinn Thomas

Making your own healthcare decisions has always been a big issue for people with disabilities. Usually this is about medical treatment for issues related to the disability itself, but giving birth is also something that's fought over.

Eugenics is the idea that only certain types of babies should be born. The U.S. Supreme Court had a case in 1927 called *Buck v. Bell*, where forcibly sterilizing people with disabilities (or "perceived" disabilities) was made legal. Forced sterilization is when someone is given surgery to prevent them from being able to get pregnant or get someone else pregnant. The "forced" part means that people aren't given a choice in this, or sometimes not even told when the

UPCOMING EVENTS

TOLEDO BUDDY WALK

October 1, 12:00-4:00, Owens Community College, put on by the Down Syndrome Association of Greater Toledo

STYLE SHOW

October 5, 10:00 at the Pinnacle. Put on by the Ability Center. Tickets are \$65.

SUPER SATURDAY DANCE

October 8, 7:00-9:00, Five Lakes Church gymnasium. For DD individuals and caregivers.

HALLOWEEN PARTY

October 27, 6:00-8:00, Courageous Acres. Costume and mask required. Put on by People First.

procedure is done. Years later, Nazis used that court case as an example to defend their own eugenics when being tried for war crimes. This is still legal in 31 states and DC. In Ohio, it's illegal to do this to any disabled person living in a facility, but not to anyone who doesn't live in a facility.

Other communities face this issue too. Recently it has been talked about a lot in connection with immigrants detained at ICE facilities.

Intersex people often have radical surgeries performed on them at birth. The goal is to make them appear more "normal." As newborns, they can't say no to this, or even choose which gender the doctors decide to change them into. The doctors get it wrong a lot. Many times, parents will hide this from their intersex children, who only find out once they're adults.

Courts, doctors, and guardians take this

choice away from people with disabilities out of a belief that we can't really understand sex and pregnancy, and so someone else needs to make the decision for us. This is especially true for people with intellectual disabilities. Other people forget that this is a part of disabled peoples' lives. This is called desexualization.

Guardians sometimes have the power to make decisions about sexual education, sterilization, contraceptives, and abortions which may limit people's rights. One recent famous case is that of Britney Spears, a bipolar woman under guardianship who was not allowed to remove her IUD so she could have a third child.

Another issue is accessibility. How can someone make an informed decision if they don't know what all of their options are? How could you understand when something is wrong if you don't know what your rights are? How can you know you're in good health when preventative screenings aren't accessible for you? Learning about these things is essential.

There are barriers to being a disabled parent. But you do have that right. Your body is your own. No one can decide what you do with it but you.

