



Bill No: HB937
Title: Abortion Care Access Act
Committee: Health and Government Operations
Hearing: February 22, 2022
Position: FAVORABLE

The Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) is a statewide coalition of women’s groups and individuals formed to provide a non-partisan, independent voice for Maryland women and families. MLAW’s purpose is to advocate for legislation affecting women and families. To accomplish this goal, MLAW creates an annual legislative agenda with issues voted on by MLAW members and endorsed by organizations and individuals from all over Maryland. **HB937 – Abortion Care Access Act** is a priority on the 2022 MLAW Agenda and we urge your support.

HB937 will protect and increase access to affordable abortion care in Maryland. In 1991, the Maryland General Assembly codified the legal right to abortion, as provided by Roe v Wade. Senate Bill 162 became a ballot measure and went into effect after Marylanders overwhelmingly supported the measure with 62% of the vote. Maryland is now considered a safe state for abortion rights even if the Supreme Court overturns Roe v Wade.

The current question for pro-choice Marylanders is: Does the right to an abortion mean women can access abortion care? Unfortunately, no. Even in states like Maryland, access is being chipped away by a shortage of trained providers, poor insurance coverage, and anti-abortion rules imposed at the federal level every time there is a shift in power. Abortion access is not safe in Maryland- only 7 of 24 Maryland jurisdictions currently have an abortion care provider. With Texas effectively overturning Roe within its borders and at least 17 other states on the brink of total bans on abortion, Maryland needs to be ready. Women in Maryland need us to protect abortion access, and so do the women who will soon be forced to travel hundreds of miles for health care.

The bill recognizes that advanced practice clinicians - nurse practitioners, certified nurse-midwives/certified midwives, and physician assistants - are qualified to provide abortion care. These clinicians are the key to ensuring access to abortion care in every region of the state. The bill also provides state support for clinical training in abortion care. Health care professionals will be able to get the training they need – including health care practitioners graduating from programs in states that ban abortion. In addition, it strengthens and streamlines insurance coverage for abortion care.

Communities of color are particularly impacted by limitations on abortion access. As we know, significant racial and ethnic disparities persist for a wide range of health outcomes, from diabetes to heart disease to breast and cervical cancer to sexually transmitted infections (STI), including HIV. This is also true for unintended pregnancies. Unnecessary barriers to abortion care increase costs and wait times, further exacerbating existing health disparities and economic injustices. This legislation eliminates unnecessary barriers and will make health care more accessible and affordable.

For these reasons, MLAW strongly urges the passage of HB937.

Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women
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MLAW 2022 Supporting Organizations

The following organizations have signed on in support of our 2022 Legislative Agenda:

Allegany County Women's Action Coalition
American Association of University Women - Anne Arundel County
American Association of University Women - Maryland
American Association of University Women - Garrett Branch
Anne Arundel County Commission for Women
Anne Arundel County NOW (National Organization for Women)
Baltimore County Commission for Women
Baltimore Jewish Council
Baltimore NOW (National Organization for Women)
Business and Professional Women of Maryland
For All Seasons, Inc.
Forward Justice Maryland
Indivisible Central Maryland
Make A Difference Monday
Maryland NOW (National Organization for Women)
Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence
Maryland Women's Heritage Center
MoCoWoMen
MomsRising
Montgomery County NOW (National Organization for Women)
Montgomery County Commission for Women
Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club
National Coalition For Sexual Freedom
National Organization for Women
NCBW Anne Arundel County Chapter
Prince George's County Alumnae Chapter
Prince George's County Drug Policy Coalition, Inc.
Reproductive Justice Inside
South Prince George's Business and Professional Women
WISE - WISE Women of Maryland
Women's Equality Day Celebration across Maryland
Women's Law Center of Maryland
Yellow Rose Foundation
Zonta Club Mid Maryland
Zonta Club of Annapolis

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