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Informational Statement SB430

Community Health and Safety Works Grant Program and Fund - Establishment

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Director of Legislation, Maryland Right to Life

We urge your amendment of SB430

On behalf of our Board of Directors and members across the state, we urge your amendment of SB430. This bill which seeks to establish a grant fund for “Community Health” facilities or improvement projects, could violate the public trust by using taxpayer funds to provide corporate welfare to the abortion industry in the form of subsidies for the construction and expansion of abortion facilities.

No public funding for abortions or abortion facilities

A 2023 Marist poll showed that 60% of Americans, both “pro-life” and “pro-choice” oppose the use of tax dollars to pay for a woman’s abortion. Maryland taxpayers believe that the state only uses public funds for abortions that are deemed “medically necessary” in order to save the life or health of the mother. Taxpayers do not support the use of public funds for elective abortions, which make up the vast majority of abortions committed in Maryland. Without amendment, this bill would allow public funds to be used as corporate welfare for the abortion industry, further subsidizing these for-profit businesses and their non-profit partners by making them eligible to receive grant funds for abortion facility development and expansion. This is in direct conflict with the will of 90% of people who prefer funding for programs that protect the lives of both mothers and children.

Pregnancy is not a Disease

Abortion is not healthcare and abortion facilities are not “community health” facilities. Abortion is violence and brutality that ends the lives of unborn children, particularly children of color, through suction, dismemberment or chemical poisoning. The fact that 85% of OB-GYNs in a representative national survey do not perform abortions on their patients is glaring evidence that abortion is not an essential part of women’s healthcare. Women have better options for comprehensive health care. There are 14 federally qualifying health care centers for every Planned Parenthood in Maryland who should be eligible for these grant funds.

Disparate Impact Statement

Because the abortion industry has targeted Black Americans for population control, more than 70% of their abortion facilities are built in minority communities. As a result, abortion is the leading cause of death of Black Americans, more than gun violence and all other major causes combined. Taxpayers should not be forced to support this violence, those who perpetrate the violence or their facilities through grants or any other means.

Proposed Amendment Language

“Nothing in this [Act, Section, Chapter] shall be construed to authorize the use of state taxpayer funds, including those appropriated by State law or in any trust fund to which funds are authorized or appropriated by State law, for abortion promotion, training, or certification, or for the distribution of abortion inducing drugs, or for the procurement, compensation, subsidization, reimbursement or other financial support of abortion providers, their affiliates or their facilities.”

SB0430 Letter of Information 1.30.24.pdf

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Maryland

DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET
AND MANAGEMENT

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SENATE BILL 430 Community Health and Safety Works Grant Program and Fund - Establishment

STATEMENT OF INFORMATION

DATE: January 30, 2024

COMMITTEE: Senate Budget and Taxation

SUMMARY OF BILL: Senate Bill 874 establishes the Community Health and Safety Works Grant Program which would provide funding for projects that improve the quality of life or increase the economic potential of the communities through crime prevention strategies. The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) would administer the program. The bill also creates a fund, the Community Health and Safety Works Grant Program Fund, to support the cost of the program. Additionally, the bill establishes a \$10 million mandate annually to the fund and allows the fund to retain all interest earned rather than reverting to the General Fund.

EXPLANATION: Senate Bill 874 establishes a new program to be administered by the DHCD. This program is supported by an accompanying special fund. That fund would have a mandated annual appropriation of \$10 million in perpetuity and be permitted to retain any interest earned on the fund. This would annually reduce General Funds available for other purposes and eliminate revenue to the General Fund from the interest earned.

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) is charged with submitting a balanced budget to the General Assembly annually and will be working with the General Assembly to achieve structural balance over the long-term. In light of current projected general fund deficits in fiscal 2026 forward, the Department urges caution in passing legislation significantly reducing general fund revenues. State government must be intentional, disciplined, and strategic with its allocation of State funding to ensure maximum impact toward priority outcomes.

It would be challenging for the State to manage this new mandated funding given the forecasted out-year deficits for the General Fund.

**For additional information, contact Laura Vykol-Gray at
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