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Planned Parenthood of Maryland

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Senate Finance Committee</b>
<b>Bill Number:</b>	<b>Senate Bill 947 - Abortion Care Access Grant Program and Fund – Establishment</b>
<b>Hearing:</b>	<b>March 6, 2024</b>
<b>Position:</b>	<b>Favorable</b>

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Planned Parenthood of Maryland (PPM) supports *SB 947—Abortion Care Access Grant Program and Fund—Establishment*. This bill creates the Abortion Care Access Grant Program with the purpose of providing operating and capital grants to abortion providers to protect the security of patients, staff and volunteers. The grant program fund would be a nonlapsing fund utilizing certain premiums collected by health insurance carriers.

The physical safety of our providers, patients, their families and our staff is of paramount importance to Planned Parenthood of Maryland. Since 1977, well before the fall of *Roe*, there have been thousands of criminal activities directed at abortion providers, patients and support staff. The National Abortion Federation (NAF) reports that there have been 531 assaults, 492 clinic invasions, 375 burglaries, 200 arsons, 42 bombings and 11 murders directed at abortion care facilities, their providers and patients since 1977.<sup>1</sup> According to the same report, the 2022 violence and disruption statistics show a devastating increase in violence in states, like Maryland, that protect abortion rights. In 2021 there were 28 instances of stalking patients or providers nationwide, just a year later in 2022 that number rose sharply to 92 incidents. That same year there was also a 100% increase in the number of clinic arsons compared to 2021. Most concerning for Marylanders is that the NAF data shows “in 2022, many anti-abortion extremists shifted their attention to protective states after dozens of clinics were forced to close in states that banned abortion. Clinics in protective states saw a disproportionate increase in violence and disruption.”

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<sup>1</sup> <https://prochoice.org/wp-content/uploads/2022-VD-Report-FINAL.pdf>

At Planned Parenthood of Maryland, our patients and staff must not only face vile comments to enter clinics, they are also subject to threats of violence and destruction, harassment and acts of physical aggression for accessing and providing legally protected healthcare. Since 2022 there have been 60 reported incidents at PPM clinics. One of the most egregious occurred in December 2023 when a known, violent protestor, followed a PPM doctor to their car. Later that day the same protestor followed a patient around a corner after they exited the clinic. This bill will have an immediate positive impact on the physical safety of our facilities and the people within by providing a funding mechanism to help providers meet their everchanging physical security needs. PPM is particularly supportive of this approach to security as the program outlined is flexible and allows providers to determine their own security needs and apply for funding to meet their unique needs.

PPM is aware that there is an issue with the funding mechanism laid out in the bill, but we are certain that the bill sponsor is working with technical experts to find a solution. As such, PPM would also support the bill as amended to fix any technical concerns.

If we can provide any additional information, please contact Erin Bradley at [erin.bradley@ppm.care](mailto:erin.bradley@ppm.care) or (443) 604-3544.