



Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

March 6, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: Senate Bill 947 – Abortion Care Access Grant Program and Fund - Establishment – Letter of Support With Amendments

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee members:

The Maryland Department of Health (Department) respectfully submits this letter of support with amendments for Senate Bill (SB) 947 – Abortion Care Access Grant Program and Fund - Establishment. SB 947 establishes the Abortion Care Access Grant Program as a special, nonlapsing fund to provide grants to improve access to abortion care services for individuals in the State and requires that certain premium funds collected by health insurance carriers be used to provide coverage for abortion care services.

SB 947 would provide safety and security grants to abortion providers to provide protection to their patients, staff and volunteers. Violence against abortion providers is an ongoing and worsening issue. The Department of Justice tracks violence against abortion providers and, in 1998, established the National Task Force On Violence Against Reproductive Health Care Providers.¹ Since 1993, ten clinic employees have been murdered and several others dealt life-threatening injuries in violent incidents that were motivated by anti-abortion animus.¹ In addition, the National Abortion Federation's 2022 Violence & Disruption Report found a sharp increase in violence in states protective of abortion rights as clinics in states that banned abortions closed following the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in June 2022.²

The Department proposes an amendment to the bill to include language in the bill that states that the names and other identifying information of the grant recipients, including abortion clinics, providers, patients, and potential subrecipients, will not be released in order to protect abortion clinics, providers, and patients that are funded through this bill. Additionally, the Department is in discussions with the bill sponsors about the best agency or office to administer the bill.

¹ National Task Force On Violence Against Reproductive Health Care Providers. U.S. Department of Justice. May 2023. <https://www.justice.gov/crt/national-task-force-violence-against-reproductive-health-care-providers>

² Violence Against Abortion Providers Continues to Rise Following Roe Reversal, New Report Finds. National Abortion Federation. May 2023. <https://prochoice.org/violence-against-abortion-providers-continues-to-rise-following-roe-reversal-new-report-finds/>

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs at sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "LH Scott", is enclosed within a faint, light blue outline of the state of Maryland.

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary

AMENDMENT TO SENATE BILL 947
(First Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT NO.1

On page 4, after line 24, insert “**(D) NAMES, ADDRESSES, ELECTRONIC MAIL ADDRESSES, TELEPHONE NUMBERS AND SIMILAR IDENTIFYING INFORMATION FROM APPLICATIONS FOR GRANTS UNDER THE FUND OR, AWARDEES UNDER THE FUND, ARE NOT SUBJECT TO DISCLOSURE UNDER THE MARYLAND PUBLIC INFORMATION ACT, STATE GOVT. 4-101 ET. SEQ.**”

Rationale: The National Abortion Federation’s 2022 Violence and Disruption Report found a sharp increase in violence in states protective towards abortion as clinics in ban states closed following the overturning of Roe v. Wade in June 2022. This amendment will protect reproductive health care clinics funded through this bill.