



Testimony for HB1412: Abortion Care Access Grant Program and Fund

The Baltimore Abortion Fund (BAF) is a community-based nonprofit that provides financial and logistical support to help people access abortion care. We serve Maryland residents from all 23 counties and Baltimore City, as well as those who are increasingly forced to travel for care.

As costs and demand skyrocket, our statewide network of abortion funds, clinics, and providers that facilitate access to abortion is being pushed to the brink.

Our organization operates a helpline that provides support with abortion care costs, travel, hotels, childcare, and more. Call volume was already rising pre-Roe, last year it doubled. Again. Our organization runs on a fixed monthly budget to ensure that support is available year-round – last month was our busiest on record, and we were forced to close our line early because available funding was exhausted, leaving dozens of calls unanswered.

It is vital that clinics and abortion funds, like ours, are adequately resourced to meet the needs of abortion seekers and address this public health crisis.

We strongly support the establishment of the Abortion Care Access Grant Fund, which would create a critical and sustained source of funding. However, for this grant program to fully meet the needs of abortion seekers, it must be amended to include support for insured individuals whose coverage is not fully meeting their needs.

Over 10% of our clients who contact us for financial support actually have some form of insurance, but their coverage is insufficient or unusable. That includes Marylanders with federal insurance – like military Tricare – that prohibits abortion coverage. That also includes people accessing abortions later in pregnancy, as inadequate reimbursement rates make it difficult for providers to accept insurance. Many abortion seekers and their families are facing out-of-pocket medical bills that range from \$5,000 to over \$24,000, even though they have insurance.

So long as abortion remains out of reach for thousands of people in Maryland, including its residents, our status as a sanctuary state remains a hollow promise. Instead of believing in sanctuary, we must continue to act in solidarity.

This grant program is an important step that will ensure that providers and abortion funds have the resources we need to transform reproductive rights into reality, provided that it removes cumbersome restrictions on funding that leave people and families behind.

We urge the Committee to return a favorable report on House Bill 1412, with the described amendment. Thank you.