

Rachele Lawton
407 Brook Road
Towson, MD 21286
rlawton@msn.com

Re: Maryland Maternal Health Act of 2024 (HB1051/SB1059)

March 4, 2024

Dear Members of the Maryland House of Delegates and State Senate,

I urge you to vote for the Maryland Maternal Health Act of 2024 (HB1051/SB1059). My name is Rachele Lawton, and I am a concerned Maryland resident. I have seen the devastating effects of the current lack of maternal health care, support, and resources available to new mothers, so I believe that this bill is crucial.

The current healthcare system is not structured well enough to support new mothers during what is, for many, a very vulnerable time. This bill is crucial because it would provide new mothers and their partners with required assessments, referrals, information and care that is now so insufficient. Without these provisions in place, new mothers and their families are at risk of extreme challenges or even devastating losses.

I have friends and family members who have lost women close to them to suicide due to postpartum depression, and the pain, sadness and complicated grief has been unbearable for them. As an educator at a public institution, I have also seen my students' lives impacted by the pain and difficulty of postpartum depression. This bill could make a difference for others in terms of prevention.

With the passage of this bill, women will leave the hospital with important information that can assist them through the postpartum depression phase, and get the referrals and assessments so desperately needed, thus reducing the maternal mortality rate in Maryland. Maternal suicide is a leading cause of maternal mortality in the United States. This is horrific and should be considered a national health emergency.

On behalf of my friends and families who have lost women to postpartum depression, I thank you for seriously considering this essential legislation.

Sincerely,

Rachele Lawton, Ph.D.