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MAYOR

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HB1412

March 8, 2024

TO: Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee
FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations
RE: House Bill 1412 - Abortion Care Access Grant Program and Fund - Establishment
POSITION: FAVORABLE

Chair Peña-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 1412.

This bill will ensure access to safe abortion care by extending grant opportunities available to family planning programs to abortion clinic providers statewide. HB 1412 will support clinics in their ability to protect their patients, staff, and volunteers by funding security staffing and other security measures. This is important for ensuring that abortion is accessible, as accessibility is what transforms a right from simply a theory to a reality.

Abortion services are one of many reproductive health services that abortion clinics provide; annual exams, contraception, testing and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases, education, as well as breast and cervical cancer screenings are often also available. In fact, reproductive health providers are often the primary source of care for some people, particularly women.¹ Connecting a person to abortion care is a connection to healthcare and choice.

Following the June 2022 Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health decision that ended Roe, fewer and fewer Americans can get abortion care in their own state due to an increase in bans and restrictions. Following this decision, the Baltimore City Administration allocated \$300,000 in general funds to support abortion and family planning services. Since then, the BCA has awarded 6 unique organizations a total of \$285,000 over two years. These funds have been incredibly impactful. For example, one of the funded organizations was able to triple both the number of Baltimore City clients and patients served, as well as the total amount of financial support provided.

At least 15 municipal governments and six state governments have also made such allocations. HB 1412 would complement steps that the BCA has already taken and would establish a permanent, sustainable fund to ensure continued access to care. As Maryland strives to remain a safe haven for reproductive justice, it must sustain and safeguard comprehensive reproductive care. For these reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on HB 1412.

¹ Hall, K. S., Harris, L. H., & Dalton, V. K. (2017). Women's Preferred Sources for Primary and Mental Health Care: Implications for Reproductive Health Providers. *Women's Health Issues*, 27(2), 196–205. <https://doi-org.proxy-hs.researchport.umd.edu/10.1016/j.whi.2016.09.014>