

Favorable Statement SB 933  
Criminal Law - Causing Ingestion of an Abortion-Inducing Drug Prohibition  
(Women's Freedom From Coercion Act)  
Stephanie Atha, Choose Hope Women's Center

As a mother and the director of a pregnancy medical clinic, I am strongly in favor of SB933. I write to you today to make you aware of a silent but urgent crisis affecting women across Maryland—the issue of coerced and unwanted abortions.

A recent study by the Charlotte Lozier Institute found that nearly 70% of women who had abortions felt pressured or that their decision was inconsistent with their values. Even more alarming, 1 in 10 women described their abortion as outright coerced. This is not choice. This is not empowerment. This is a failure to protect vulnerable women from force, manipulation, and abuse.

Coercion takes many forms. It may come from an intimate partner, an employer, a trafficker, or even a family member who sees a woman's pregnancy as an inconvenience rather than a life. Women are told they will be abandoned, fired, or even harmed if they do not comply. And with the rise of mail-order abortion pills, it has never been easier for an abuser to make that choice for them—sometimes even without their knowledge.

Maryland has long championed reproductive rights, but what about the right to say no? What about the right to be protected from coercion? Right now, there are no legal safeguards ensuring that a woman is making this decision freely. No requirement to screen for coercion. No penalty for those who force a woman into an unwanted abortion.

This Assembly has the power to change that. We can enact commonsense protections—ensuring that every woman seeking an abortion does so free from coercion. We can require abortion providers to screen for pressure and abuse, offer resources and support, and hold perpetrators accountable.

If we truly care about women, we must protect her choices—not just the ones that are convenient. Let's stand up for the women of Maryland and say, once and for all, no woman should be forced into an abortion she does not want and those that do force a woman will be held accountable by the law.

Thank you.

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