

## **Testimony in FAVOR of SB 0272 (HB 0393)**

Thank you for allowing me to speak today.

I was diagnosed with stage 3 grade 3 triple negative and ER+ breast cancer back in August. This is my first time facing cancer, and I am currently still going through chemotherapy and have a very long journey filled with surgeries, radiation, and scans ahead of me. Like many patients, I began treatment extremely overwhelmed—trying to process a diagnosis I never expected while continuing to show up every day as a mother to my two daughters and a wife to my husband.

Shortly after my diagnosis, I was informed about cold capping—a method shown to significantly reduce hair loss during chemotherapy. However, I was then informed of the cost. Because insurance does not cover cold capping, the cost, upwards of \$3000, made it inaccessible to me, as it does for so many patients. It is unfortunate because I do feel that cold capping could have helped preserve a sense of normalcy and emotional stability for me and my family during my treatment. I can't begin to explain the sadness and shock I felt when clumps of my hair began falling out, even though I thought I was fully prepared for it.

Chemotherapy takes so much from a person—time, energy, a sense of normalcy. Hair loss due to chemotherapy is often described as cosmetic, but for patients in treatment, it is deeply personal and emotional. It's the moment when illness becomes public, when strangers know your diagnosis before you've chosen to share it. Losing my hair has meant losing confidence and control at a time when so much has already been taken away from me. It has meant my daughters watching their mother physically change in ways I cannot shield them from. In addition, I feel like I have lost my sense of femininity and self-expression. Seeing my bald head every day is a constant reminder of the chokehold this disease has on me.

Patients should not have to choose between financial strain and emotional well-being while fighting cancer. Insurance coverage for cold capping is a compassionate, commonsense step toward more comprehensive cancer care. Insurance already covers other appearance-related cancer needs such as breast reconstruction, wigs, and prosthetics. Cold capping fits squarely within this same category of medically necessary quality of life care.

House Bill 0393 and Senate Bill 0272 address this current gap in care. These bills recognize that cancer treatment is not only about survival, but also about mental health, dignity, and the well-being of patients and their families.

I respectfully ask Maryland lawmakers to pass HB0393 and SB0272 so cancer patients across our state can receive more compassionate, comprehensive care. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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