

Written Testimony - SB664 Declaration of Rights – Right to Privacy

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Oppose



Ambulance arrives at Planned Parenthood

My name is Maria Hayden, I am a resident of Ellicott City and a nurse of 34 years.

This proposed amendment is precariously vague. It does not define its application or purpose and its overreaching nature should arouse concern. I am not aware of a huge outcry from Marylanders protesting “We need more privacy!” No. “Privacy” is legal code for abortion. We know the intention of this bill is to encompass and blanketly permit the practice of abortion in the Maryland Constitution. I fear SB664 will be harmful to women – it will not protect women but leave them vulnerable to abuse.

The danger of this amendment is that it will not adorn abortion to be an epitome of freedom, but it would rather encrust it in immovable law. The procedure could not be governed to provide regulation in the time and type of procedure, the

location, the practitioner, the medications, the licensing, the tests, the information dispersed. No, under the guise of privacy, a woman's rights to safety and information would be erased.

This so-called right to privacy is not defined anywhere in our nation's constitution. In the Roe v. Wade decision the Supreme Court, while intimating a right to privacy from the 14th Amendment, did specify that **privacy is not absolute**- that it must quote: **"be balanced against the government's interests in protecting the woman's health and protecting prenatal life."**

78% of Americans want abortion regulated in some way. This amendment would eliminate that possibility. It would take away your power, our elected Maryland officials, and prevent you from performing your duty to protect your constituents by regulating or deregulating the procedure of abortion. As science changes, as social, economic or legal issues arise, the people of Maryland deserve to have legislators who are allowed to shape the laws that govern one of the most common and significant procedures done on women in our state.

In the facility where I work, informed consent must be obtained for any invasive, special or surgical procedure. As a Vascular Access Specialist, I am required to ensure that there is full understanding of the health condition, treatment options, and the material risks and benefits before I begin a procedure. And I'm only inserting a catheter into a vein, not administering anesthesia or performing surgery. The majority of my time may be spent speaking to patients because this matter of patients' rights is so important. Should I proceed without an informed consent and there is a complication, I could be sued for battery.

Women seeking abortion deserve these same rights. Presently, women are not informed about the risks of abortion which include: hemorrhage, infection, pelvic inflammatory disease, uterine perforation, infertility, hysterectomy, future miscarriage. Nor are they told that post-abortive women have higher incidence of eating disorders, depression, drug and alcohol abuse, and suicide. Women are harmed by abortion. The photo at the beginning of this testimony shows Baltimore City Fire Department paramedics wheeling a gurney into the Baltimore City Planned Parenthood to a woman suffering a hemorrhage after an abortion. The ambulance ran "hot" to the facility, meaning it used lights and sirens due to the severity of the call. This is not an isolated, but a periodic

occurrence. Hemorrhaging is a life-threatening condition that is the most common abortion complication for which ambulances are called.

What if risks became even more critical— if a new abortion method were devised, performed by unqualified practitioners, and was wrought with frequent grave complications and death? If SB664 were in place atrocities like this couldn't be reported, couldn't be regulated, and women would not be required to be informed about it. What if there were a startling rise in human trafficking with women being forced into dangerous procedures. Do we want this to be private? The danger of coercion is obvious. How many illegal abortions and other crimes could be concealed under the cloak of privacy?

SB664 deceptively uses the euphemism of privacy when it would really leave women defenseless. Instead of empowering women, this amendment would diminish their dignity and disentitle them to the right to be informed, the only way can they be truly free to make a choice.