SB0455 Employment Discrimination – Time for Filing Complaints
Presented to the Honorable Will Smith and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
February 9, 2021 1:00 p.m.

_____

POSITION: SUPPORT

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to issue **a favorable report on SB0455 Employment Discrimination – Time for Filing Complaints**, sponsored by Senator Charles Sydnor.

Our organization is an advocate for reproductive health, rights, and justice. Pregnant people have the right to fulfill their pregnancy and parenting desires while employed in a workplace free of discrimination and harassment. Expanding the period for filing a discrimination complaint will allow those experiencing discrimination a longer period of time to report harassment, and work to end discriminatory practices that impact pregnant people. Everyone has the right to maintain a healthy pregnancy, and no one should be forced out of their job due to their decision to have a family.

Harassment and discrimination exist in many forms and are not always overt and easily identified in the workplace. In 1978, Congress enacted the Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA) to define that discrimination on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth, or other related medical conditions is a form of sex discrimination prohibited by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.[1] However, since this law was enacted, there have been thousands of violations. Nationally, from 1997-2011 there were approximately 6,000 federal pregnancy discrimination charges filed with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), and this number has been increasing.[2] Notably, women of color and low-income workers have been severely disproportionally impacted by workplace discrimination. The National Partnership for Women and Families shows that in fiscal years between 2011 and 2015, Black or African American women filed 28.6% of pregnancy discrimination charges with the EOCC, while only making up an estimated 14.3% of the female labor force.[3]

Every person should have the opportunity to report discrimination and harassment violations that happen to them in the workplace and should not be pressured by a limited reporting window for these claims. The extension of time also allows the employee to learn after giving birth about any instances of discrimination while the employee was working during her pregnancy, such as being passed over for promotion or denied a professional development opportunity due to antiquated stereotypes. This bill will offer further protection to pregnant, expectant, and parenting Marylanders, and ensure that women can continue working without fear or harassment from their colleagues. For these reasons, NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland **urges a favorable committee report on SB0455**. Thank you for your time and consideration.

---

[1] Enforcement Guidance on Pregnancy Discrimination and Related Issues. U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/enforcement-guidance-pregnancy-discrimination-and-related-issues
[2] Efforts to Combat Pregnancy Discrimination. Center for American Progress.
https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/news/2018/11/02/460353/efforts-combat-pregnancy-discrimination/
[3] The National Partnership for Women and Families. Data Brief Fiscal Years 2011-2015 https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/economic-justice/pregnancy-discrimination/by-the-numbers-women-continue-to-face-pregnancy-discrimination-in-the-workplace.pdf

(Closing argument sentence or two)

For these reasons, NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland **urges a favorable committee report on bill#.** Thank you for your time and consideration.

(Citations are linked when possible and in Chicago Style)