

Planned Parenthood of Maryland

Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee

Bill Number: House Bill 997

Title: Equal Protection for Unborn Human Life Act

Hearing: March 19, 2021

Position: Oppose

Planned Parenthood of Maryland opposes *House Bill 997 – Equal Protection for Unborn Human Life Act*. This unconstitutional measure would effectively ban all abortions in Maryland. The bill would criminalize providers by subjecting them to murder or manslaughter charges. While there is a narrow exception for protecting the life of the mother, the bill places equal weight on the life of the pregnant individual and fetus.

Planned Parenthood of Maryland is opposed to this bill because it is unconstitutional and dangerous. Individuals should have the ability to make their own decisions about pregnancies. Health care providers should be able to support the decisions of their patients without fear of prosecution. A ban on abortion services jeopardizes the health, safety, and welfare of Marylanders.

This bill would also effectively prohibit or restrict some types fertility services. Since the bill provides for equal legal protection of zygotes or fertilized eggs, it could nearly eliminate the use of services such as invitro fertilization. Thus, the bill would deny access to fertility services for Marylanders who are having difficulty conceiving or carrying a pregnancy.

Planned Parenthood of Maryland asks for an unfavorable report on HB 997.