

HB 1171 – Declaration of Rights – Right to Reproductive Liberty

OPPOSE

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I respectfully request that you OPPOSE HB 1171. An excerpt from the NY Times opinion piece by Ross Douthat on Nov 30, 2021, titled "The Case Against Abortion", clearly provides the arguments to not enshrine abortion rights in the Maryland Constitution.

"At the core of our legal system, you will find a promise that human beings should be protected from lethal violence. That promise is made in different ways by the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence; it's there in English common law, the Ten Commandments and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We dispute how the promise should be enforced, what penalties should be involved if it is broken and what crimes might deprive someone of the right to life. *But the existence of the basic right, and a fundamental duty not to kill, is pretty close to bedrock.*

There is no way to seriously deny that abortion is a form of killing. At a less advanced stage of scientific understanding, it was possible to believe that the embryo or fetus was somehow inert or vegetative until so-called quickening, months into pregnancy. But we now know the embryo is not merely a cell with potential, like a sperm or ovum, or a constituent part of

human tissue, like a skin cell. *Rather, a distinct human organism comes into existence at conception, and every stage of your biological life, from infancy and childhood to middle age and beyond, is part of a single continuous process that began when you were just a zygote.*

We know from embryology, in other words, not Scripture or philosophy, that abortion kills a unique member of the species Homo sapiens, an act that in almost every other context is forbidden by the law.

This means that the affirmative case for abortion rights is inherently exceptionalist, demanding a suspension of a principle that prevails in practically every other case. This does not automatically tell against it; exceptions as well as rules are part of law. *But it means that there is a burden of proof on the pro-choice side to explain why in this case taking another human life is acceptable, indeed a protected right itself."*

Abortion rights should never be enshrined in any Constitution, Federal or State level, much less fully fund such an endeavor.