



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

March 30, 2022

TO: The Honorable Delores G. Kelley
Chair, Finance Committee

FROM: Marc Elrich
County Executive

RE: HB 1171, Declaration of Rights - Right to Reproductive Liberty, Support

House Bill 1171 would amend the Maryland Constitution, subject to adoption by voters in the next general election, to declare that abortion is a fundamental right in the State not to be impeded upon by the State unless justified by a compelling State interest.

As the federal constitutional right to access abortion in the United States is currently being considered by the U.S. Supreme Court¹, I believe it is critical for the State to take action to protect access to abortion care for Marylanders because access to abortion in Maryland will not be immune to the Court's decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health*. When Texas banned nearly all abortions in 2021, wait times for abortions reached as high as 23 days in neighboring states. We can expect an even worse outcome following the *Dobbs* decision, as twenty-six states are poised to nearly eliminate abortion access within their borders.

Proposing to amend the Maryland Constitution and enabling voters to affirm their support for access to abortion care is timely and necessary to ensure this fundamental right is protected for years to come. We must not wait until federal protections for abortion care are lost in order to protect the right to abortion care in Maryland. I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 1171.

¹ *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health*