

Dear Maryland Assembly:

I am writing to you concerning HB 1171. What about the rights of preborn children? These children are individuals at conception. They depend on the uteri of their mothers for life. Preborn children should have the same rights as children outside the womb. If I chose to kill or neglect my outside the womb children it would be a crime.

I understand there are situations, for example: tubal pregnancy, when it is necessary to cause a preborn child to die to save the mother. But such situations are rare. Even with pre-eclampsia the child can be born early to save both the mother and child. Thanks to technology babies can be born earlier and earlier and still survive.

There is one area of reproductive freedom I support. The pregnant mother has the duty and right to decide the best care for her child(ren) and herself. She might choose an OB. She could choose a midwife. She can hire a doula. The mother gets to choose the birth place. I don't want the government interfering with those choices.

Some parents might get a negative diagnosis. They should not be able to kill the child. But they should be able to withhold life extending measures, if the child has a terminal condition.

To summarize: I support the rights of the preborn. But I also support parents' rights and duty to make healthcare decisions for their children.

Sincerely,

Martha Ellen Cahalan