

SB0890

Oppose

Dr. Frank Arlinghaus

3010 Evergreen Way, Ellicott City MD 21042

I ask the members of the committee to oppose Senate Bill 890. It is an extreme bill that benefits abortion and the abortion industry at a time when we have much greater needs in other areas, and is fundamentally flawed.

The bill makes significant expenditures every year by establishing a training program for an industry that has no shortage of cash. Given the continuing and increasing shortage of other healthcare professionals like nurses, this seems to be a far less desirable use of the public's money. \$3.5 million per year could be better spent elsewhere.

The bill also relaxes the physician requirement, expanding the number of potential providers in far too broad a way. If we are to believe abortion is health care, we need to treat abortion like we do other forms of health care. One aspect of this is to consider that the complications of either surgical or chemical abortion requires a properly trained physician, as a woman's life may depend on it. Mid-level practitioners may be able to handle routine cases, but when a complication occurs, the requirement of a physician suddenly becomes obvious.

The bill continues to make the mistake of allowing decisions on waiving parental notification to be made solely by one with a financial interest in the decision and (very unlike other health care scenarios) without consequences. Maryland's deliberate lack of record-keeping means we don't know how many abortions are done on minors without parental notification, nor do we know whether any abortion provider has turned a minor down or required parental notification.

The bill also forces insurance providers to cover abortion without a deductible or copayment. This is an unwarranted burden and interference in the insurance industry, not allowing the marketplace to support plans that either don't cover abortion or cover it as other health procedures, with a copay or deductible. It is a form of using the companies to supplement the

state budget with a tax hidden in insurance rates, borne by consumers who otherwise would be called taxpayers, many of whom don't seek insurance coverage for abortion.

From an individual insurance perspective, it fails to provide for the needs of individual consumers to purchase insurance that satisfies their conscience rights. Beyond this, it makes no distinction between early term abortions and late term abortions, expanding the category of those who would find the fully funded abortion provision objectionable. This is not merely a pedantic impractical distinction, for Maryland has an abortion clinic in Bethesda (CARE, medical director Leroy Carhart) that advertises third trimester elective abortions done up to 35 weeks, well past the 24 weeks often used as the marker for viability. Recent polls show that Americans are overwhelmingly against late term abortions such as these.

Requiring abortion coverage that is fully funded under any conditions with no deductible and no co-pay also places abortion into a special category different from common conditions that require daily monitoring and medication, such as diabetes.

I ask that you return an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 890 for the reasons outlined above.