



Secular Maryland

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HB 1171 - SUPPORT

Declaration of Rights - Right to Reproductive Liberty

Dear Chair Kelley, Vice-Chair Feldman, and Members of the Finance Committee,

Secular Maryland supports House Bill 1171 which would amend the Maryland State Constitution to affirm a right to reproductive health care, including abortion. Public policy in a pluralistic society should affirm a privacy right for individuals to make their own reproductive choices.

Our freedom to opt out of continuing a pregnancy may conflict with our neighbors' religious beliefs about a claimed elevated status conferred upon humanity by a claimed deity from the moment of conception. We disagree with those religious beliefs and the obligations on our behaviors that are then derived from those beliefs. We are skeptical regarding the veracity of those religious beliefs, or we positively reject those religious beliefs as wrong and false. We believe there is no supernatural realm, or there is no deity, or that deity has not conferred the specified special status upon humanity. Accordingly we see no overriding and ever-present ethical requirement to refrain from relying on pregnancy prophylactics, or to continue with pregnancy through birth and caring for the child. We instead see a more complex set of context sensitive ethical and practical considerations which may favor decisions that initially help to block, or afterwards abort, a pregnancy.

Our ethics are anchored in, and derived from within, our understanding of how the universe works. Our understanding of how the universe works is not anchored in, nor derived from, pre-existing ethics that are pre-defined independently of our understanding of how the universe works. And our understanding of how the universe works is derived pragmatically on a best fit with the overall available empirical evidence basis. The reliability of our ethics depends on the veracity of their factual foundations. Logic and reason alone, without the empirical grounding, fails to obtain facts.

If approved by voters in November 2022, this amendment could protect abortion in Maryland from future U.S. Supreme Court decisions that could change the decades old, but contested, legal framework protecting abortion nationally.

Respectfully,
Mathew Goldstein
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