

HB1171 - Declaration of Rights - Right to Reproductive Liberty OPPOSED (Unfavorable)

Dear Respected Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing in opposition of House Bill 1171, which seeks to add a right to an abortion to the Maryland state constitution. This bill, besides being intentionally divisive, is unnecessary given Maryland's already very permissive abortion laws. Legal scholars from both sides of the abortion debate agree that in the event the Supreme Court of the United States overturns Roe versus Wade, nothing would change in Maryland women's ability to seek abortion in this state.

I also believe the clause of the proposed state amendment which allows for the state's compelling interest is at odds with a declaration that a person has the right to an abortion at all. If someone has the right to something, it cannot be limited or obstructed. It is already widely known that Maryland is a destination for third trimester, late-term, elective abortions. By essentially replacing Maryland's current viability standard with a compelling interest standard, we could see an even further expansion of late-term, post-viability abortions throughout our state. Late-term abortion is still incredibly unpopular with the electorate, even an electorate that is permissive of abortion at earlier stages of pregnancy. The declaration of a right to an abortion would not only expand late-term practices in our state but also create the necessity to fund such a practice from the state budget. There are already hundreds of thousands of dollars of the state Medicaid funding that goes towards elective abortions under the "health of the mother" exception, which is abhorrent to the taxpaying public. It would be an incredible injustice to create public funding for elective, late-term, or post-viability abortions in Maryland.

I urge you to issue an unfavorable report on HB1171.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Rak
Charles County Right to Life
President