



COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

February 23, 2022

The Honorable Dolores Kelley, Chair
The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Vice Chair
Senate Finance Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 East Wing
11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401 - 1991

RE: Letter in Support of SB 890

As a Commissioner of the Montgomery County Commission for Women, I write to express our strong support of SB 890, the Abortion Care Access Act of 2022, and urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on this bill. The Commission is a 15-member advisory board appointed by the County Executive to advise it, the County Council, and county, state and federal government on matters affecting women and girls. We represent the interests of all the women in our County who constitute more than half of the residents of Montgomery County. Support for this legislation falls squarely within the Montgomery County Commission for Women's strategic priority of supporting and increasing financial security for women.

Several years ago, I helped a lifelong friend through a very traumatic event in her life which resulted in an abortion. We had to drive many miles to find a physician who would actually perform the abortion without fear of reprisal. Her abortion could have easily been performed near her home had we had access to a qualified advanced practice clinician other than a physician. In fact, fewer than half of all Maryland jurisdictions currently have an abortion care provider because Maryland has an antiquated physician-only law that prohibits advanced practice clinicians such as nurse practitioners, midwives and physician assistants from providing abortions.

Advanced Practice Clinicians (APCs) already provide a large portion of primary health care to reproductive-aged women and to families as a whole. They are in medical practices throughout the state of Maryland. They care for patients in diverse settings and more likely to provide care in rural and underserved populations. It goes without saying that APCs are extremely critical to the expansion of health care access in Maryland.

Access of safe, legal abortion care is also impacted by poor insurance coverage that makes abortions just plain unaffordable with very high deductibles and skyrocketing out-of-pocket costs to the women. Maryland is one of the few states that covers abortion through state Medicaid but it

is not guaranteed and only for certain women receiving Medicaid. Medicaid and private insurance should offer equal coverage of abortion so that all people—including those who are low-income—can access comprehensive and compassionate care.

As the nation awaits a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that could significantly erode abortion rights, state laws on the issue have taken on a whole new meaning. And in Maryland, it is even more critical that SB 890 is passed this year.

Sincerely,

Jan Molino
Montgomery County Commission for Women

Commissioners:

Donna Rojas, Chair
Patricia Maclay – First Vice President
Tonia Bui – Second Vice President
Isabel Argoti – Recording Secretary
Isabel Argoti
Arlinda Clark
Nicole Y. Drew
Ijeoma Enendu
Janet LaValle
Betty Romero
Chai Shenoy
Angela Whitehead Quigley
Tondalayo Royster
Diana Rubin

Executive Director
Jodi Finkelstein