

HB 1171

Oppose

Dr. Frank Arlinghaus

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I ask the members of the committee to oppose House Bill 1171 due to the extreme nature of the bill. In particular, amending the Maryland Constitution is an unusual and extreme measure, and this bill would take an extreme position on abortion.

Maryland already has extreme abortion laws compared to other states, but this bill would prevent the state from reasonable regulation. The consequences would include elective abortion throughout all nine months, paid for by the state, and removing the legislature's ability to enact reasonable regulation without repealing or amending the Constitution again.

It can be reasonably interpreted to prevent any action on the part of the legislature to limit abortion of a viable or late term fetus, to limit state funding of abortions, or to enact any number of reasonable restrictions designed to protect the health and safety of women receiving abortions.

A recent Marist poll shows that 71% of Americans support some limits on abortion, and that 81% of Americans believe that laws can protect both the mother and her unborn child. A number of issues found broad support, suggesting that the extreme position of this amendment goes well beyond what the public believes.

By removing the legislature's ability to act, the legislature abandons its responsibility to consider reasonable regulations. This amendment in particular takes such a restrictive view that the few restrictions in place would be removed.

I ask that you return an unfavorable report on House Bill 1171 for the reasons outlined above.