



Testimony on SB890
Abortion Care Access Act
Position: **FAVORABLE**

To Chair Kelley & Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Ricarra Jones and I am the Political Director of 1199SEIU. We are the largest healthcare workers union in the nation, with over 10,000 members who work in Long Term Care Facilities and hospitals across Maryland & DC. Our union supports legislation that will make abortion more accessible and affordable to anyone who needs an abortion. We urge a **favorable** report on SB890: Abortion Care Access Act to provide more clinical training for healthcare workers to provide abortions and requiring the MD Health Benefit Exchange to adopt regulations to provide subsidies to cover costs of insurance premiums for abortions.

1199SEIU members know all too well that there is a massive shortage of health care workers. The short staffing crisis is true when it comes to abortion providers too. Two-thirds of Maryland counties do not have their own abortion care providers. Not only are there too few abortion care providers to serve Marylanders right now – if the Dobbs ¹decision is upheld in the Supreme Court, Maryland will likely have thousands of patients from out-of-state coming to Maryland to get an abortion. In September 2021 when Texas passed its vigilante anti-abortion law, Planned Parenthood health centers bordering Texas experienced a 1082% increase in patients with Texas zip codes seeking abortion compared to September 2019 and 2020. An influx from out of state coupled with the current short staffing crisis can lead to delays in accessing care. Abortion

¹ Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization is a pending U.S. Supreme Court case dealing with the constitutionality of a 2018 Mississippi state law that banned abortion operations after the first 15 weeks of pregnancy.

is a time-sensitive process and care gets more expensive with each passing week after the first 10 to 12 weeks gestation.

Abortions must not only be accessible, they must be affordable for everyone. In Maryland, Medicaid coverage for abortions only allows for care to be covered in certain circumstances. These limitations leave low-income Marylanders struggling to afford abortion care. Everyone should be able to rely on permanent coverage for abortions. We need to establish coverage through Maryland's Medicaid system because private insurance plans' coverage of abortion is extremely susceptible to attacks at the federal level.

Abortion is healthcare. All healthcare should be affordable and accessible. Please vote yes on HB890. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Ricarra Jones
Political Director
1199SEIU UHW E.