



TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

SB890 Abortion Care Access Act

Position: Support

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Date: February 23, 2022

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization that works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. The League believes that a basic level of quality health care at an affordable cost should be available to all U.S. residents, including reproductive health. The League supports a woman's right to make her own decisions about her health care.

Access to abortion services in Maryland is limited by health care provider shortages and lack of insurance coverage. Barriers to access abortion services are expected to increase as pregnant people travel to Maryland for health care they are not able to obtain in their own state. States have enacted over 100 abortion restrictions in 2021. This is the highest number of restrictions passed since *Roe v. Wade* was decided by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1973.

The U.S. Congress enacted the Hyde Amendment in 1976 to block federal funds from being used to pay for abortion. This result is limited coverage of abortion under Medicaid and other federal programs, including the military's TRICARE program and the Indian Health Service. The impact is greatest on low income people of color. Pregnant people must pay out-of-pocket for abortion services and the added expense of travel costs due to abortion restrictions and bans.

Access to abortion should not depend on where you live or the lack of health care providers in your community. Currently, the law in Maryland states that only physicians can provide abortion care. This law needs to change and include licensed advanced practice clinicians (APCs) such as nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and midwives. There are states, including New York, that already utilize APCs to provide facets of abortion care. The recommended change to the Maryland law is supported by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American Public Health Association.

SB890 establishes and alters certain requirements regarding abortion services, including requirements related to who performs abortions in Maryland. It also addresses the provision and coverage of abortion services by the Maryland Medical Assistance Program and certain insurers', non-profit health service plans, and health maintenance organizations.

The League urges a favorable report for SB890.