

Maryland Legislative Lobby for Life Inc.

HB 1171 Right to Reproductive Liberty
2022 Legislative Session

March 30, 2022
Finance Committee
Unfavorable

Good afternoon. This testimony is from Maryland Legislative Lobby for Life, Inc. defending the right to life since 1982.

If HB 1171 stopped after the word liberty on page 1, line 18, it might be seen as an amendment which protected Marylanders from an oppressive government intent on enforcing, for example, a Chinese type of forced abortion.

It does not stop there however and we would like to present two problems that lead us to ask you to vote no on this bill.

The first problem is about fights over interpretation of vague words in the bill, the second is over a fundamental change to the state.

Page 2, line 2, saying that the state may only “indirectly” “burden” by “the least restrictive means”, (line 4), the right to reproductive liberty for a “compelling state interest” (line 3) opens up a wild west of interpretation. Any oversight will be claimed to be too direct, too burdensome, too restrictive, not part of the state’s interest. Just imagine the charlatans who can set up practice in such circumstances. Such vagueness should not be written into our Constitution.

The second problem is that this proposed Declaration #49 is contrary to our Declaration of Rights and our entire understanding of our state’s government.

Our Declaration of Rights gives thanks to God for our civil and religious liberties then describes what kind of people we are and the point of why there is a government.

It says:

“We, the People of the State of Maryland, grateful to Almighty God for our civil and religious liberty, and taking into our serious consideration the best means of establishing a good Constitution in this State for the sure foundation and more permanent security thereof, declare:

Article 1. That all Government of right originates from the People, is founded in compact only, and instituted solely for the good of the whole;”

H B 1171 the Right to Reproductive Liberty which proposes to be the last article in our Declaration of Rights opposes the spirit of the Declaration of Rights. We are supposed to be “in compact only”-sticking to each other, sticking up for each other, all for one, one for all. This proposed declaration of rights puts all our unborn children outside the compact. Our government is “instituted solely for the good of the whole”. HB 1171 is absolutely not for the good of the whole since it would put a right to kill into our constitution. Is it usual in a constitution to enumerate the right of one group to kill another group? Who will be the next group we throw outside the compact, whose killing we put into the constitution violating Article 1.?

Vague, unclear language, a right to kill written in, article 49 violating article 1.

Please consider these problems with HB 1171 and give it an unfavorable report.

Thank you,

Sheila Wharam,
Secretary,
Maryland Legislative Lobby for Life, Inc.