

Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee

Bill Number: House Bill 1171 - Declaration of Rights - Right to Reproductive Liberty

Hearing Date: February 22, 2022

Position: Support

Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington, DC (PPMW) is proud to serve Maryland's Prince George's and Montgomery Counties as the oldest and largest provider of family planning services in the Metropolitan Washington area. Founded in 1937, PPMW provides high quality, comprehensive reproductive health care, including abortion, at health centers in Suitland and Gaithersburg, as well as high quality sexual health education across Prince George's and Montgomery Counties.

PPMW supports House Bill 1171 – Declaration of Rights – Right to Reproductive Liberty:

“That every person, as a central component of the individual's rights to liberty and equality, has the fundamental right to reproductive liberty which includes the right to make and effectuate decisions regarding the individual's own reproduction, including but not limited to the ability to prevent, continue, or end their pregnancy the state may not, directly or indirectly, deny, burden, or abridge the right unless justified by a compelling state interest achieved by the least restrictive means.”

Maryland should act now as the right to reproductive freedom is under attack. In the coming months, the Supreme Court is expected to rule in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, a challenge to a ban on abortion at fifteen weeks gestational age. That case, and the dozens of other reproductive rights cases making their way through the courts, could result in significant erosion of reproductive freedom or even the overruling of *Roe v. Wade*.



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Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington, DC

Though a right to abortion has been Maryland law since 1992, and many folks consider states like Maryland will steadfastly continue to protect the right to abortion into the future, a constitutional amendment is the strongest protection. Right now, a near total abortion ban is in effect in Texas. While the history and landscape in Maryland are a far cry from Texas or Mississippi, over half of states in the U.S. are poised to ban abortion if *Roe v. Wade* is overturned, and often successful campaigns against reproductive freedom start small and grow gradually over time. To ensure that current and future generations of Marylanders are protected, Maryland should act now.

PPMW was founded on the visionary idea that access to sexual and reproductive health care could transform people's lives. PPMW's mission is to provide high-quality, compassionate healthcare, including reproductive care; promote sexual health; and advocate for reproductive rights and health equity for all. A constitutional amendment is the strongest protection, and we ask for a favorable vote on House Bill 1171.