



WESTMORELAND CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Chair Shane E. Pendergrass
Health & Government Operations Committee
House Office Building
6 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Honorable Chair Pendergrass:

I am writing as a Christian minister who serves people of faith in Maryland in strong support of House Bill HB 952 -Access to Abortion Care and Health Insurance Act. In 2017 while pursuing my graduate studies in Theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York City I made the decision to receive an abortion. As an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ (UCC) I prayed before, during, and after making the decision to protect my individual health and receive an abortion.

When I attempted to meet with a doctor to discuss my pregnancy options many OBGYN offices were at capacity and unable to schedule an appointment even though I was covered under private insurance. Eventually, Planned Parenthood was the care provider who enabled me to care for my body in a way that aligned best with my reality. As a person of faith who believes that all bodies are sacred, I deeply urge Maryland's legislative decision makers to step up and protect and support access to all forms of reproductive health care. Because of my personal experience with receiving abortion care, I strongly request leaders in Annapolis to support the many thousands of people in the state of Maryland, who like me, will become part of the 1 in 3 women who need an abortion during their life.

The congregation of people that I serve in Maryland are a part of the majority of people of faith in America who support the right to reproductive freedom, and specifically the right to access legal abortion in all or most cases. In contrast to a vocal minority of religious voices, our faith in the United Church of Christ teaches us that humans have been gifted with the ability to make decisions about their own lives from The Divine, and this includes decisions about reproductive healthcare.

As threats to federal abortion protection persist, Maryland needs to be ready to protect and expand abortion access. The number of abortion providers in Maryland must be expanded outside of metropolitan areas as currently two-thirds of Maryland counties do not have an abortion provider. Furthermore, public and private health insurance coverage must be improved to cover abortion care. When I received an abortion although I was covered under private insurance the financial hardship was still a burden for me as an unemployed graduate student. Maryland must consider those who bodies are at risk and care for the most vulnerable in our society by endorsing House Bill HB 952 -Access to Abortion Care and Health Insurance Act.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony. It is with great pride that I urge a favorable vote. If I can provide any further information, please contact me at Rev. Kaeley McEvoy at kaeley@westmorelanducc.org. Blessings to you.

Sincerely,

Rev. Kaeley McEvoy
Westmoreland Congregational United Church of Christ



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Bethesda, Maryland
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