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**Bill:** HB0626  
**Title:** Pregnant Person's Freedom Act of 2022  
**Date:** March 11, 2022  
**Committee:** Health & Government Operations  
**Position:** Favorable

To the Esteemed Members of the Committee:

FreeState Justice is a statewide legal advocacy organization that seeks to improve the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer ("LGBTQ") Marylanders. We work across Maryland to provide free civil legal aid to LGBTQ Marylanders with low incomes facing discrimination. Those clients include students in Maryland schools facing individual bullying and systemic discrimination.

To the esteemed members of the committee:

FreeState Justice acknowledges a fundamental right to sexual and bodily autonomy. This means self-determination in whether or not to become a parent and to do so with dignity and respect. Becoming or not becoming, a parent should be free of violence, discrimination, and punishment, especially from the government. LGBTQ people, like all people, need access to reproductive healthcare and services without fear to secure gender-affirming care and sexual and reproductive healthcare.

We acknowledge that many LGBTQ people, including transgender men, intersex, lesbian and bisexual women, and nonbinary and gender non-conforming people, can get pregnant, use birth control, have abortions, carry pregnancies, and become parents. LGBTQ rights depend on the precedents set in *Roe v. Wade* in protecting the right of bodily autonomy free of government intervention. We recognize that efforts to control reproduction are often linked to efforts to control sexuality and gender identity. We also acknowledge that denying abortion access and reproductive health on "moral" grounds often includes limiting access to gender-affirming care and LGBTQ sexual health services, like HIV prevention and treatment. Unfortunately, we continue to see the criminalization or bans on healthcare across the country. This includes criminalizing HIV transmission, bans on gender-affirming care, and criminalizing parents seeking gender-affirming care.

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*FreeState Justice, Inc. (formerly FreeState Legal Project, Inc., merging with Equality Maryland) is a social justice organization that works through direct legal services, legislative and policy advocacy, and community engagement to enable Marylanders across the spectrum of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer identities to be free to live authentically, with safety and dignity, in all communities throughout our state.*



FreeState Justice strongly opposes the criminalization of pregnancy loss or termination. We strongly oppose the criminalization of healthcare and public health issues. Since the 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling, many individuals across our county have been subjected to a criminal investigation, arrest, prosecution, and conviction for pregnancy loss or the threat thereof. These situations have involved pregnant people who have experienced miscarriage or stillbirths; have defended themselves against forced C-sections; have been suspected of taking legal or illegal substances while pregnant; experienced a physical accident that threatened or ended the pregnancy; did not receive prenatal care; or, engaged in the termination of a pregnancy outside of a clinical setting.

**We urge a favorable report on House Bill 676 to protect bodily autonomy and prevent the criminalization of healthcare.**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this critical legislation, and please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,



Jeremy LaMaster (he/they)  
Executive Director



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