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Support
HB 952 - Access to Abortion Care and Health Insurance Act
House Health and Government Operations Committee
February 22, 2022

My name is Tamara Robinson, I am a Baltimore City homeowner and resident, and I support HB 952 - Access to Abortion Care and Health Insurance Act. This bill would require the Maryland Medical Assistance Program and state-regulated health plans to cover abortion care without cost-sharing.

In 2015, I sought care at my local Planned Parenthood for counseling and health services when I found that my chosen form of contraception failed, leading to an unplanned pregnancy. Much like all of the major medical decision I've made in my life, I did not take that experience or the options for care before me lightly. As an employed professional, I was fortunate to have access to private insurance that allowed me to seek care at the provider of my choosing. That included the counseling I received from a licensed clinician and the abortion care I sought from my provider.

As some may know, an unplanned pregnancy can be accompanied by a great deal of fear and anxiety. The last thing that I would have wanted to tackle was figuring out how to pay for my abortion or dealing with an unmanageable bill after receiving care. Being able to access abortion care through my insurance provider was critical. To have access to a healthy, safe, and legal abortion meant that I could focus on getting the supportive care that I needed at that time, and I could not imagine what I would have done if my care and treatment had been limited by my ability to pay for health care out of pocket.

The reality is that I had health insurance coverage that included abortion care as an approved procedure, and I could focus on making a decision in full support of my physical, mental, and emotional health with the guidance of care providers that I trusted. For some, that is not the case.

It should not be acceptable that a pregnant person with insurance is unable to access the care that they need or make informed decisions about their bodies simply because abortion care is arbitrarily carved out of their coverage. Nor should it be that people with Medicaid coverage aren't allowed to access the full spectrum of care for a pregnant person. That does not allow for fair, equitable, and inclusive access to health care. This is not what I want for other Marylanders. My wish for Maryland is that insurance providers are required to cover care, including abortion.

I have spent much of the last few years helping support pregnant individuals without adequate coverage access funds to help them get care. It is no easy task to be in of need urgent care while also trying to scrape together the funds to pay for it. Too many people have to manage this burden, and that simply should not be.

For the foregoing reasons, I urge a favorable report on HB 952. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.