

Chair Shane E. Pendergrass
House Office Building
6 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD 21401

SUPPORT – HB 952
Access to Abortion Care and Health Insurance Act

Dear Honorable Chair Pendergrass:

My name is Rosalyn Levy Jonas, and I have been a Maryland resident for nearly 40 years. Though I did not live in Maryland at the time, I had a difficult and challenging experience in the state that predated my residency by more than 17 years.

In 1966, when I was just 20 years old, single, pregnant, and desperate, I stood alone on Eutaw Street in downtown Baltimore, waiting to be picked up by a man I'd never met, whose job it was to deliver me to the place where I was scheduled to have an illegal abortion.

My abortion was performed in a farmhouse somewhere in rural Baltimore County, by a man whose face I never saw. For his services, I paid him \$600 in cash, and after a few hours, I was returned to Eutaw Street. I consider myself lucky; no complications prevented me from later choosing to bring children into the world. I have two adult daughters whose reproductive rights I am determined to protect. On their behalf and on behalf of the women in this state and across the country, I have served on the boards of state and national organizations tasked with preserving their rights.

I had my abortion seven years before *Roe v. Wade* gave women the right to control their own reproductive destinies. Seven years before women, desperate to control their bodies and their lives, could stop using coat hangers and knitting needles and stop drinking poison—and stop standing alone on Eutaw Street, hoping to meet a man who was actually a doctor. Seven years before girls and women could stop their search for the underground networks that existed to connect them with abortion providers. And seven years before desperate women had to come up with the cash equivalent of \$5,200 today.

HB 952 will just support abortion access by ensuring that Medicaid and private insurance companies comprehensively cover abortion care. Abortion care must be covered like any other health care service. No woman should have to endure the fear, uncertainty, and financial hardship that I did in 1966. Maryland women deserve care that is accessible, available, and affordable. I urge this committee to act now to protect women, and support HB 952. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share my story.

Sincerely,

Roz Jonas
Bethesda, MD 20814