



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

Dear Honorable Chair Pendergrass,

We are Advocates for Reproductive and Sexual Health, a student organization at Johns Hopkins University. We strongly support HB 952 – Access to Abortion Care and Health Insurance Act. This bill will increase abortion access in Maryland by ensuring that abortion services are financially covered without cost sharing in both the Maryland Medical Assistance Program and state regulated health plans.

We are college students and come from diverse backgrounds: different states and different socioeconomic statuses. Hence, we all experience different barriers to accessing health care. For example, many of us are on an insurance plan provided by the university and would not be able to afford the high cost of an abortion. Many of us who are on our parents' insurance would not feel comfortable telling our parents we need an abortion due to the privacy surrounding a medical procedure.

Although we are an urban campus, we recognize that not all colleges in Maryland are located in cities. This represents a huge obstacle to the accessibility of abortions in Maryland because, if there are no qualified abortion providers in the area, college students like us would have to travel long distances to access healthcare that is very time-sensitive and spend money doing so. We have very busy, sporadic schedules and are already under significant stress in college. Most of us do not have cars with us. Therefore, this limitation caused by proximity to abortion providers is unjust. Due to these constraints on accessing abortion, a large proportion of pregnant college students will be subjected to carry to full term, at a time in their lives when they are not mentally or financially ready/capable. This would negatively affect the lives of both the college student and their child.

As college students who want to build a better future for our country, we strongly believe reproductive autonomy is a powerful tool to fight gender and income inequality. It gives people who can get pregnant the right to make decisions that will help them further their personal, academic and career goals. Without reproductive health there is no overall health and, without these bills, college students like us cannot have the full freedom to decide what's best for our futures.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony, and we urge a favorable vote. If we can provide any further information, please contact Advocates for Reproductive and Sexual Health at arsh.jhu@gmail.com

Sincerely,

Advocates for Reproductive and Sexual Health at Johns Hopkins University