

**HB0937 - Abortion Care Access Act; HB0952 - Access to Abortion Care and Health Insurance Act**

Presented to Chairman Pendergrass and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee

February 22, 2022, 1:00 pm

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**POSITION: SUPPORT**

The University of Baltimore Chapter of If/When/How encourages the House Judiciary Committee to **issue a favorable report on House Bill 937 – Abortion Care Access Act and House Bill 952 – Access to Abortion Care and Health Insurance Act**, sponsored by Delegates Kelly, Pendergrass, Pena-Melnyk, Cullison, and Rosenberg.

Our organization, If/When/How, strives to transform the law and policy landscape through advocacy, support, and organizing so all people have the power to determine if, when, and how to define, create, and sustain families with dignity and to actualize sexual and reproductive wellbeing on their own terms. The ability to choose if, when, and how to create a family is closely linked to an individual's economic success, educational attainment, and general health and well-being. Our chapter is made up of law students residing in Baltimore City, as well as other communities in the State of Maryland, who believe that the right to abortion is a vital one.

The Supreme Court will rule on *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* in the coming months, creating what is likely to be a severe restriction or elimination of the right to abortion. This ruling will precipitate a ripple effect throughout the United States, with states walking back the right to abortion for their constituents.

Through this legislation, these vital rights can be secured for the Maryland community. This will become even more crucial given that states surrounding Maryland may walk back abortion rights in the wake of the *Dobbs* decision. Thus, Maryland may become a stop gap for individuals in those states (such as West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Virginia) who are seeking abortion access post-*Dobbs*.

Abortion remains frustratingly inaccessible to many members of our community which is especially concerning given the potential increase in individuals seeking abortion from surrounding states. The establishment of the Abortion Clinical Care Training Program as well as the Training Program Fund would expand the number of abortion providers within our state. Currently, Marylanders have limited abortion access due to provider shortages and gaps in insurance coverage. Almost two-thirds of Maryland counties do not have an abortion provider, creating obstacles to care for especially those in our rural eastern and western-most counties. Allowing nurse practitioners, nurse-midwives, licensed midwives, and physician assistants to provide this care would go far to alleviate this burden.

As of 2021, a substantial majority of Marylanders have expressed support for ensuring individuals have access to a full range of reproductive healthcare services. As the representatives for the people of Maryland, the legislature has the opportunity to further the desires of the people by grounding them in the law. **The University of Baltimore Chapter of If/When/How urges the House Judiciary Committee to issue a favorable report on these bills to support the health and well-being and solidify the rights of Marylanders seeking an abortion.**