TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION OF BILL SB0504 - UNFAVORABLE
Equal Protection of Unborn Human Beings Act of 2022

TO: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Chris Apple
7001 Cradlerock Farm Court
Columbia, MD 21045
District 13

Feb 16, 2022

Abortions and unplanned pregacy are serious concerns, and it is important that we view them as a public health issue and look for data-driven solutions. Though addressing these concerns is in everyone's best interest, I believe this bill takes a flawed approach because *criminalizing abortion does not actually reduce abortion rates.*[1] Researchers studying the abortion rate in different countries found no difference between countries where abortion is legal, and countries where it is against the law. Other factors, like access to contraception, were found to be the biggest drivers in reducing unplanned pregnancy and abortions.

All this means that this bill may not prevent any abortions in Maryland. However, it *would* ensure that people are incarcerated for their abortions - even if they have other children they need to provide for. It will push Marylanders towards unsafe and unregulated abortions which will worsen our overall public health.

We know several things that *will* reduce abortions. Equitable access to birth control[2] and comprehensive reproductive education are excellent alternatives to this bill. These would empower Marylanders and have far-reaching public health benefits, in addition to lowering the abortion rate in Maryland.

I ask that the committee to take a careful look at the data, and make the choice not to criminalize abortions but to invest in other programs that will actually make an impact. I respectfully urge the committee to issue an unfavorable report on SB0504. Thank you.

[1]
https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/05/14/abortion-rates-are-declining-is-developing-countries-worldwide-whats-causing-it/
[2]
https://slate.com/human-interest/2016/05/abortion-rates-are-constant-in-developing-countries-while-developed-ones-see-a-sharp-drop.html