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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 16, 2022

The Senate Finance Committee

SB 891 Maryland Parental Involvement Enhancement Act

Statement of Support by Bill Sponsor Senator Mary Beth Carozza

Thank you, Chair Kelly, Vice Chair Feldman, and members of the Senate Finance Committee for this opportunity to present Senate Bill 891: The Maryland Parental Involvement Enhancement Act. This bill would require parental notification of non-emergency medical procedures including abortion and would allow physicians to waive the requirement during a medical emergency or if the minor requests a judicial waiver.

I consistently have supported policies that increase parental involvement. Many of you will recall the extended debate we had on Senate Bill 41 which lowered the “Age of Consent” from 16 to 12 years old for children in need of mental health services. At that time, many parents, medical experts and health organizations opposed lowering the age to 12 and noted that children simply are not able to safely make medical decisions without their parents or guardians.

My purpose in introducing Senate Bill 891 is to protect our children and to let parents be parents. Many well-respected medical organizations like the Maryland Psychological Association and the Maryland Board of Nursing, to name a couple, agree that most pre-teen and teen age children do not have the cognitive capacity to make medical decisions without parental involvement, and it is not developmentally appropriate to expect them to do so.

Senate Bill 891 allows parents and guardians to be involved in assessing the risks, benefits, and impact of non-emergency medical procedures performed on their children.

Today, you will hear from Michelle Talkington, a mother of six children, who will share two personal experiences that makes the case for strengthening parental involvement and protecting our children. You also will hear from Debra Brocato, a Registered Nurse, who will further explain the importance of this legislation, especially at this time coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I encourage my friends and colleagues on the Senate Finance Committee to work with me on the Maryland Parental Involvement Enhancement Act and respectfully ask for a favorable report on Senate Bill 891. Thank you for your kind attention and consideration.