



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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Senator Brian Feldman, Chair
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: **TESTIMONY OF SUPPORT**: SB 341: Public Senior Higher Education Institutions – Reproductive Health Service Plans - Requirements

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

I commend Senator Feldman and Delegate Kelly for their consistent leadership on prioritizing and advancing access to reproductive healthcare for Maryland women and their families.

Unplanned pregnancies can disrupt educational attainment and stifle economic mobility, which can result in long-term, adverse life outcomes for mothers and their babies. Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Guttmacher Institute show that in Maryland, between 56-60% of pregnancies are unplanned. The highest rate is among women between the ages of 20-24, many of whom attend our two-year and four-year institutions.

I believe that the legislation before you today could unequivocally decrease unintended pregnancies amongst college-aged women. Requiring our senior institutions of higher education to develop a thorough and collaborative plan between students, administrators and health officials will impact young women for generations to come.

Last September, I committed \$1 million to expand reproductive healthcare and clinic services at Howard Community College. In partnership with the Howard County Health Department, this funding will provide the full spectrum of effective contraception options, necessary medical equipment, and most importantly, staff salaries for a full-time nurse, full-time social worker and part-time options counselor. Research shows that abundant access to comprehensive family planning and preventive measures reduces the chances of unplanned pregnancies that often lead to abortions.

Last session, I supported Senate Bill 890 and House Bill 937 which will expand access to reproductive healthcare by widening the scope of which medical professionals can be credentialed as qualified abortion providers, which now has the necessary funding for training and licensure expansion.

I'm grateful to live in the state of Maryland where legislators like you continue to prioritize a woman's rights to reproductive freedom. I look forward to working with all of you and the Moore-Miller Administration to advance and fund critical initiatives like this Senate Bill 341.

I urge a favorable report and appreciate your consideration.

All the Best,

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive