

Committee: Senate Finance Committee

Bill Number: Senate Bill 798 - Declaration of Rights - Right to Reproductive Freedom

Hearing Date: March 1, 2023

Position: Support

Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington, DC (PPMW) is proud to serve Maryland's Prince George's and Montgomery Counties as the oldest and largest provider of family planning services in the Metropolitan Washington area. Founded in 1937, PPMW provides high quality, comprehensive reproductive health care, including abortion, at health centers in Suitland and Gaithersburg, as well as high quality sexual health education across Prince George's and Montgomery Counties.

PPMW supports Senate Bill 798 – Declaration of Rights – Right to Reproductive Freedom:

“That every person, as a central component of an individual’s rights to liberty and equality, has the fundamental right to reproductive freedom, including but not limited to the ability to make and effectuate decisions to prevent, continue, or end one’s own pregnancy. The state may not, directly or indirectly, deny, burden, or abridge the right unless justified by a compelling state interest achieved by the least restrictive means.”

Maryland should act now as the right to reproductive freedom is under attack. The Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in June 2022 in the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* decision. Far from leaving the decision to secure the right to abortion access up to the states, anti-abortion extremists are attempting to take Mifepristone—a drug used in the most common form of medication abortion in the U.S.—off the market. A decision in *Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine v. U.S. Food and Drug Administration* could come out of Amarillo, Texas, any day now.



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Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington, DC

Though the right to abortion has been Maryland law since 1992, and many folks assume states like Maryland will steadfastly continue to protect the right to abortion into the future, a constitutional amendment is the strongest protection. Right now, abortion access has been eliminated in 12 states, including Maryland's neighbor to the west, West Virginia. While the history and landscape in Maryland are a far cry from Texas or Mississippi, we could see total bans in more than half of states in the U.S. before long. Often, successful campaigns against reproductive freedom start small and grow gradually over time. To ensure that current and future generations of Marylanders are protected, Maryland should act now.

PPMW was founded on the visionary idea that access to sexual and reproductive health care could transform people's lives. PPMW's mission is to provide high-quality, compassionate healthcare, including reproductive care; promote sexual health; and advocate for reproductive rights and health equity for all. A constitutional amendment is the strongest protection, and we ask for a favorable vote on Senate Bill 798.