

Committee: Senate Finance Committee
Bill: SB798 – Declaration of Rights – Right to Reproductive Freedom
Position: **UNFAVORABLE**

Dear Senator Griffith and fellow members of the Finance Committee,

Claiming that abortion access needs to be expanded is outrageous when Maryland has **some of the highest abortion rates in the nation** due to the **permissive language** used in our state laws and a **lack of regulation**. Maryland is one of only three states that does not report any abortion data to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Abortion is already “enshrined” in Maryland and the argument that abortion is a fundamental right is offensive when healthy full-term babies are aborted at will. When preborn life is so easily discarded, we are not working in the best interest of ALL Marylanders. All human life is equal and worthy of protection.

As a mother of three young children, I know how difficult pregnancy can be and that the impact ultimately falls upon women. For decades, I have proudly supported women in unplanned pregnancies by donating items to local pregnancy centers that offer women the choice of LIFE for their preborn babies. About three years ago, I walked into my home after a long day at work and was a bit perturbed that my babysitter was talking on the phone instead of watching my children. When she got off the phone, I gruffly asked her what that was all about. She told me that her friend from high school called to tell her she was unexpectedly pregnant and didn’t know what to do. It dawned on me the potential impact of my selfish reaction to her phone call, and I knew I had to suddenly change gears. I told my babysitter to call her back and that I would help her friend.

I knew in that brief, yet powerful, conversation that I had an opportunity to do something and was determined not to lose the life of this preborn baby. My babysitter shared with me the difficult situation her friend faced including homelessness and unemployment. I explained to her about the many resources available to her. She could get an ultrasound, she could get clothes and diapers, and these would be **free** resources! I said I knew of shelters where she could live leading up to the pregnancy and even after giving birth. These young women (around age 18) had never heard of these potential supportive opportunities.

I began making calls and found out that Mary’s Home in Ellicott City had some room and could help house this young woman. We were able to secure a free ultrasound for her at Women’s Care Center on Belair Road the very next day. So fast-forward to today, I am happy to share that the young lady chose LIFE and was able to live in Mary’s Home and give birth to her beautiful daughter. She now works at the shelter as “house-mom” to care for other women who face similar difficulties that she overcame.

Please offer the voiceless preborn child a chance at life and a future here in Maryland. Abortion only hurts women and does not empower them or offer them so-called “freedom”. The greatest gift and asset to our communities is human life, and it must be protected from the violence of abortion.

Respectfully submitted by Rachel Ullmann of District 7A in Kingsville, Maryland.