



March 01, 2023

SB 798 - SUPPORT

Declaration of Rights - Right to Reproductive Liberty

Dear Chair Griffith, Vice-Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Finance Committee,

Secular Maryland supports this bill which would amend the Maryland State Constitution to affirm a right to reproductive health care, including abortion. Public policy in a pluralistic society should affirm a right for individuals to make their own reproductive choices.

Our freedom to opt out of continuing a pregnancy may conflict with our neighbors' religious beliefs about a claimed elevated status conferred uniquely upon humanity by a claimed deity from the moment of conception. We disagree with those religious beliefs and reject the obligations on our behaviors that are derived from those beliefs. We are skeptical regarding the veracity of those religious beliefs, or we positively reject those religious beliefs as mistaken. We believe there is no supernatural realm, or there is no deity, or that deity has not conferred the specified special status upon humanity. Accordingly we see no overriding and ever-present ethical requirement to refrain from relying on pregnancy prophylactics, or to continue with pregnancy through birth and caring for the child. We instead see a more complex set of context sensitive ethical and practical considerations which may favor decisions that initially help to block, or afterwards abort, a pregnancy.

Our ethics are anchored in, and derived from within, our understanding of how the universe works. The reliability of our ethics depends on the veracity of their factual foundations. And our understanding of how the universe works is derived pragmatically on a best fit with the overall available empirical evidence basis. Logic and reason alone, without the empirical grounding, fails to reliably obtain facts. Our understanding of how the universe works is not anchored in, nor derived from, pre-existing ethics that are pre-defined independently of our understanding of how the universe works.

If approved by voters, this amendment protects abortion in Maryland from U.S. Supreme Court decisions that change the decades old, but contested, legal framework protecting abortion nationally.

Respectfully,
Mathew Goldstein
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