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February 17, 2023

Senator Melony Griffith
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East. Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SB 798, Declaration of Rights–Right to Reproductive Freedom
Position: Support

Dear Chairperson Griffith and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Jodi Finkelstein and I served as the NARAL Pro-Choice (now Pro-Choice MD) Executive Director from April 2011-April 2015. I have been a long time women's rights advocate in Maryland, in particular Montgomery County. I am writing in full support of HB 705, Declaration of Rights–Right to Reproductive Freedom.

During my tenure as executive director of Pro-Choice Maryland, we built on the leadership Maryland had shown over the years in ensuring women had access to ALL of their reproductive rights, which includes abortion, parenting and adoption. We worked to educate the community about crisis pregnancy centers and fought against state bills that would limit a woman's right to choose.

Serving as the executive director was not easy, as I received hateful letters, was the target of numerous protests, and I even had holy water thrown on me. I remained diligent and was fueled by the stories of hundreds of women who were grateful that they lived in a state that not only supported abortion, but was a national leader in women's reproductive health.

In 1992, voters OVERWHELMINGLY supported Question 6 whereby abortion rights became a part of Maryland's Charter. With Roe. v Wade now overturned, defining a woman's right to choose in Maryland's Charter is no longer enough. HB 705 is exceptionally important as it enshrines women's reproductive rights into Maryland's constitution and assures women that no matter who is in elected office, reproductive choice is an inalienable right.

I urge the committee's favorable report on HB 705.

Sincerely,

Jodi Finkelstein

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