



Testimony submitted on behalf of the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons by Dr. James Kelly for the State of Maryland Senate Finance Committee on March 13, 2023.

I am Dr. James Kelly a physician and a psychiatrist with 35 years experience treating women who have had abortions. **The majority** of post-abortive women that I have treated have told me that they felt **coerced** into their abortions.

Coercion comes in many forms. Common forms of coercion include various types of threats : including loss of relationships , abandonment, being taken out of school or kicked out of their homes, and overt physical threats and violent physical assaults. Coercion often comes from the baby's father or her own family. Some of the women were teenagers, some were adults, and some were enslaved in sex trafficking and coerced prostitution.

Part of a proper psychiatric or medical evaluation is to ask the women about the past history including relationships and pregnancies. Typically, the women will tell me that I am the only health care provider who has given them the time to discuss their abortions. Usually, they say other physicians limit the discussion to listing the number of abortions and births and end the discussion.

Often when asked about pregnancies and abortions the women will spontaneously cry and describe their pain and remorse. They often say they have been told that they should not have the true feelings and symptoms that they have . Usually, they are very pleased to have someone to confide their abortion story to.

They often describe symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, suicidal attempts, crimes, self-injurious behaviors (such as cutting, burning, banging and abusing themselves), and other mental illnesses, - that started after **their coerced abortions**.

SB 832 has a very narrow application, it only deals with **coercion**, to prevent the **trauma from coercion**. It does **NOT** in any way affect any other abortion laws.

Anyone that is truly favors **real freedom of choice** ,and is against the **abuse of coercion** ,who cares about women and wants to help women avoid lifelong problems with suicide, crime, drug abuse and mental illnesses should vote for this bill.

The Association of American Physicians and Surgeons respectfully urges this committee report favorably on SB 832.