



Ella Ennis, Legislative Chairman
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The Honorable Melony Griffith, Chairman
and Members of the Finance Committee,
Maryland House of Delegates

RE: **SB0798** – Declaration of Rights – Right to Reproductive Liberty – **OPPOSE**

Dear Chairman Griffith and Committee Members,

The Maryland Federation of Republican Women strongly opposes SB0798 for a number of reasons.

The proposed constitutional amendment is written so broadly that it would allow abortion at any time. A Goucher poll of Marylanders' attitudes about abortion conducted in October 2021 found that more than half (54%) of respondents want some restrictions on abortion.

The proposed Constitutional Amendment would take the power to regulate abortion away from our elected representatives, remove all existing health and safety measures for pregnant women, and force Maryland taxpayers to fully fund abortions even when in direct opposition to their personal beliefs and moral objections.

No regard is given to the man, without whose contribution the pregnancy would be impossible. As a nation, we have always held that parental responsibility begins at conception. Parental rights (both the mother and father) begin at conception as well.

No regard is given to the resulting child even when it has reached viability. Government and society should not abandon pre-born children, especially when they have reached viability. The decision of a woman to end her pregnancy should not unequivocally override the rights of a viable fetus.

In the United States, it has been generally accepted in the medical community for decades that viability occurs at approximately 24 weeks of gestational age.¹ Children born at 23 weeks can and have survived and grown up to be normal, healthy human beings.

In addition, the Amendment states that "every person...has the fundamental right to reproductive freedom, including but not limited to...". What will the amendment allow beyond the right to "prevent, continue or end one's own pregnancy"?

¹ Chervenak, L.B. McCullough Textbook of Perinatal Medicine, 1998



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It appears to include allowing minors -- under 21 years of age -- to consent to surgery to remove their reproductive organs for gender reassignment, a procedure that would obliterate their ability to reproduce. A minor would be able to make that major life decision at an age that science and the Maryland General Assembly (in advocating for other bills) have stated their brains are still developing and that they are not mature enough to be fully responsible for their decisions and actions.

For all of the above reasons, please give **SB0798** an **UNFAVORABLE** report.

Sincerely,

Ella Ennis
Legislative Chairman
Maryland Federation of Republican Women