



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

AFFILIATED WITH NATIONAL AFL-CIO

7 School Street • Annapolis, Maryland 21401-2096

Balto. (410) 269-1940 • Fax (410) 280-2956

President

Donna S. Edwards

Secretary-Treasurer

Gerald W. Jackson

HB 705 - Declaration of Rights - Right to Reproductive Freedom House Health and Government Operations

February 21, 2023

SUPPORT

Donna S. Edwards

President

Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO

Madame Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 705. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of Maryland's 300,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

The Maryland State & DC AFL-CIO believes that everyone should have control over their own personal reproductive healthcare. Our 2022 Convention unanimously approved a resolution in support of defending reproductive healthcare, calling on the government to act by codifying these rights and expanding access to reproductive healthcare services. Threats to reproductive healthcare are threats to workers' economic rights as well.

We urge the committee to issue a favorable report.

Maryland State & DC AFL-CIO
2022 Convention
Resolution #14 - Defending Reproductive Rights

WHEREAS, the US Supreme Court has overturned the nearly 50-year-old landmark Roe v Wade decision in which the majority opinion held that there is a fundamental right to privacy that springs from the 1st, 4th, 9th and 14th Amendments to choose whether to continue a pregnancy without excessive government interference, affirming the constitutional right to privacy, which the court has relied on in previous decisions, and

WHEREAS, the Court's decision to overrule Roe and Casey remanding the authority to regulate abortion return to the people and their elected state representatives uprooted decades of precedent and the freedom which millions of Americans have relied on, and

WHEREAS, the Court's decision and Dobbs v Jackson will inevitably jeopardize the health and well-being of millions of people and threatens the economic security and well-being of millions of individuals who should be allowed to decide intimate family planning questions for themselves in consultation with their healthcare providers and others with whom they trust, and

WHEREAS, access to reproductive health gives women the power to make decisions regarding their work lives, their futures and the economic security of their families because the decision about when and whether to bear children is fundamental to the ability to pursue self-sustaining work, and

WHEREAS, the Court's decision is taking our nation backward with at least 26 states having a patchwork of varying restrictive state legal regimes governing access to reproductive health, further solidifying barriers to care in far too many states and opening the door to divisive and socially injurious measures that threaten those who choose not to continue a pregnancy with criminal prosecution and would criminalize the provision of reproductive health potentially including the treatment of miscarriages and ectopic pregnancies, by medical professionals, and

WHEREAS, the Court's opinion not only threatens reproductive freedoms for millions but that the Court's inconsistent contemplation of whether a right even exists in the 14th Amendment jeopardizes other freedoms and rights, and

WHEREAS, the Court's Dobbs decision potentially opens the floodgates to relitigating past Supreme Court precedents that advance fundamental American rights and liberties, including its exceptionally narrow approach to analyze whether people have a right through constitution protection of substantive due process.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Maryland State and D.C. AFL-CIO recognizes the aspiration of people to full rights and justice and the inherent values at stake in this decision of dignity, equal justice, and freedom

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Maryland State in D.C. AFL-CIO will continue its advocacy to protecting Maryland and the District of Columbia's access to reproductive rights and support federal legislation codifying full reproductive rights and expanded access to reproductive healthcare services.