

Chair Atterbeary, Vice-Chair Wilkins and members of the Committee, I am Charlene Pullias, a Democrat from Garrett County in western-most Maryland. Although this is one of the most conservative areas in the state, we believe all persons deserve full reproductive rights now.

I am offering written testimony in support of House Bill 705 which will allow a referendum vote by the people of Maryland in November 2024: Declaration of Rights Article 48 that will make reproductive freedom and justice a permanent part of the Maryland Constitution.

My family history includes a great-grandmother who died from an abortion; a grandmother who purchased two abortions at the cost of her entire family inheritance. At 21 I was denied the right to tubal ligation because I would not ask my father or my husband (from whom I was divorced) to grant permission. My mother has since passed away. Roe v. Wade has been over turned. I would like to see, before I die, the next generation entitled to reproductive freedom without the indignity and danger suffered by so many for so long.

I would like to enter into the record the following from Governor Wes Moore:

The Constitutional Amendment provides the highest possible level of protection of reproductive freedom in Maryland. The bill provides for the rights of individuals to make and effectuate their own decisions about abortion, birth control and continuing a pregnancy. This legislation is singularly the most important action we can take to protect the reproductive freedom of the generations behind us.

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