

Position: Favorable
To: Maryland House of Delegates, February 17, 2023
Re: House Bill 705 "Declaration of Rights - Right to Reproductive Freedom"
From: *Mountain Maryland Alliance for Reproductive Freedom (MMARF)*

We are the *Mountain Maryland Alliance for Reproductive Freedom*, a non-partisan, grassroots organization of people in Allegany and Garrett Counties, committed to assuring and expanding reproductive healthcare to residents in rural Mountain Maryland. Our mission is:

- To provide and facilitate education concerning sex and reproductive healthcare in a factual, open and nonjudgmental manner;
- To advocate for public policy that ensures accessible and affordable family planning services and reproductive choice in healthcare, including contraception and abortion;
- To coordinate efforts with other individuals and organizations that support reproductive rights and accessible and affordable reproductive healthcare, family planning services and education; and
- To aid and support all Marylanders' ability to have and maintain healthy families.

In our part of rural Western Maryland, there is a large and growing constituency who understand that reproductive healthcare, including education, family planning, contraception and abortion, must be easily accessible and affordable for all - **as a matter of right.**

This comes from our collective life experience in rural Mountain Maryland, where reproductive healthcare is neither easily accessible nor affordable, and where misinformation and stigma still hamper us. We also know that the freedom to make reproductive healthcare decisions can be eliminated, as our neighbors in West Virginia are experiencing. And, we know from experience that the lack of access to reproductive healthcare has a profound impact on the ability of young people and families to thrive and succeed, and indeed impacts our communities' economic development. <https://health.maryland.gov/pophealth/Pages/Rural-health.aspx>, <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/healthcare/our-insights/how-prioritizing-health-could-help-rebuild-economies>. **We are strongly supportive of HB705.**

Very truly yours,
Mountain Maryland Alliance for Reproductive Freedom

Cc: Delegate Jim Hinebaugh (District 1A), Senator Mike McKay (District 1)

