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BILL NO.: **HB 705**

TITLE: Declaration of Rights - Right to Reproductive Freedom

SPONSOR: The Speaker (By Request – Administration)

COMMITTEE: Health and Government Operations

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: February 21, 2023

Baltimore County strongly **SUPPORTS** House Bill 705 – Declaration of Rights – Right to Reproductive Freedom, a constitutional Amendment that would enshrine in Maryland’s Constitution a woman’s right to reproductive freedom. Baltimore County Executive John Olszewski, Jr. firmly believes that reproductive rights are human rights and should be fully protected by the law, and has consistently supported an amendment to Maryland’s constitution to strengthen protections for reproductive freedom.

Under Maryland law, access to abortion is protected, and health care providers are free to provide critical care and support to women in need of a full suite of reproductive health care services. Some may argue that these current legal protections are sufficient. Unfortunately, for almost 50 years, many Americans believed their right to reproductive freedom was similarly protected. But, in the wake of the recent Supreme Court decision to overturn *Roe v Wade*, many states are changing laws criminalizing medical procedures and the individuals providing critical services for women. Baltimore County’s State’s Attorney Scott Shellenberger and County Executive Olszewski reaffirmed that no one would, or should, be criminalized for seeking abortion care or providing such care or other supportive services in Baltimore County.

Baltimore County remains fully committed to protecting the rights of all women. Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 705. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov.