

Written Testimony of Rebekah Gantner
Submitted to the Health and Government Operations Committee
On HB705
“Declaration of Rights - Right to Reproductive Freedom”
February 17, 2023

Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony before this committee in opposition to HB705, the “Declaration of Rights - Right to Reproductive Freedom.”

For more than a decade now, I have dedicated my life to the pro-life cause. My experience includes managing a home in inner city Baltimore for women who were homeless and pregnant, volunteering at a pregnancy center in St. Louis, MO, serving as a live-in caregiver for individuals with physical and developmental disabilities, advocating for the Heartbeat bill on the federal and state level, and I currently serve as a board member of a pregnancy center in VA, and work full-time for an organization that has 1,200 affiliate pregnancy centers.

Through my experiences, I have had the opportunity to walk alongside women facing difficult situations and watch the miracle of a birth. While each of these women have different backgrounds and circumstances, their children were all uniquely created in the image of God. It is my joy to now see some of these children in school and thriving.

The Declaration of Independence states, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” This proposed bill would deny unborn babies the very life that they are guaranteed.

Within the first month after conception, the baby’s face begins to develop and his heart starts to beat. By the third month, the baby has fully formed arms, hands, fingers, feet, and toes. In the fourth month, the unborn child has eyebrows, eyelashes, nails, and hair. The baby also kicks, yawns, and stretches.

HB705 completely ignores both the rights and humanity of the unborn child. It views a baby in the womb as a commodity rather than a unique human being made in God’s image. Furthermore, it denies an unborn baby the opportunity to have a chance not only at living but to become a future leader, sibling, and parent.

For these reasons, I strongly encourage the members of this committee to protect life and vote against HB705.

Thank you for your time.

Rebekah Gantner