



Maryland National Organization for Women

P0 Box 7716 Silver Spring MD,20907

---

BILL NO: House Bill 705

TITLE: Declaration of Rights- Right to Reproductive Freedom

COMMITTEE: Health and Government Operations

HEARING DATE: February 21, 2023

POSITION: **FAVORABLE**

---

Maryland National Organization for Women's (NOW) purpose is to take action through intersectional grassroots activism to promote feminist ideals, lead societal change, eliminate discrimination, and achieve and protect the equal rights of all women and girls in all aspects of social, political, and economic life. Maryland NOW is committed to working toward accessible reproductive health care for all women and LGBTQIA+ people. NOW fully supports safe and legal abortion, because protecting access to abortion effectuates vital constitutional values, including dignity, autonomy, equality, and bodily integrity. Maryland NOW enthusiastically supports House Bill 705- Declaration of Rights- Right to Reproductive Freedom, which recognizes the right to be free from government intrusion into personal life decisions, and the right to control one's own body without influence or coercion.

Since the Supreme Court's devastating decision to overturn Roe V Wade stripped Americans of federal abortion protections, an immense urgency in the fight for reproductive health, rights and justice persists at the state level. The federal government has made it clear that protecting Americans' right to equitable and autonomous healthcare is not a priority, however in Maryland we have the opportunity to reimagine what is possible for our communities by creating a vision for the future that will create a more equitable health care landscape for all.

Thanks to the tireless work of advocates, state elected officials and a 1992 ballot measure, Marylanders have propitiously defended reproductive freedoms within our state, but we cannot take this for granted. A constitutional amendment is the most comprehensive way to ensure Marylanders have the right to a full range of reproductive health care services no matter where the balance of power lies in our state government. This is our best chance of ensuring future generations have the autonomy to decide what happens to their bodies and when, and to be a safe haven for those seeking reproductive healthcare from states where their basic liberties have been stripped away by extremist lawmakers.

It is for those reasons that Maryland National Organization for Women respectfully urges a favorable report on HB705.