

Christians Advocating for Life in Annapolis 2023

Working to foster God's vision for human flourishing

BILL: House Bill 705
TITLE: Declaration of Rights—Right to Reproductive Freedom
COMMITTEE: Health and Government Operations Committee
DATE: February 16, 2023 1:00 pm
WHO: Jennifer Brown, Christians Advocating for Life in Annapolis 2023
POSITION: **OPPOSE**

Committee Chair, the Honorable Delegate Pena-Melnyk, and HGO Committee Members,

I know you are committed to serving your constituents as members of the House of Delegates. I myself have worked on the Hill and in the Maryland General Assembly and am now an instructor of Political Science, and like you I understand the importance of the Constitution and the freedoms which all Americans hold dear.

During the course of my marriage I experienced all kinds of abuse and am no stranger to injustice and horrors associated with it. That is why I am writing you today about HB705. No person should experience violence at the hands of another. No one should have their voice eliminated. Yet, that is exactly what HB705 will enshrine in our state Constitution forever. It eliminates the voice of the “fetus” which is Latin for “baby.” The baby is an entirely separate and unique life.

Babies have bodies, heartbeats, and can feel, this is scientific fact. Creating an amendment that allows for the termination of life puts us all at risk. Regardless of the terminology used, eliminating the value of the unborn, is the same thing my husband did to me. He believed he had a “right” to abuse me and because he believed he had a right to treat me the way he did, I no longer had any rights at all. At the end of the day you will not just silence the voices of millions of babies, but you will set a dangerous precedent of silencing people of Maryland, for any reason at all.

While reviewing last years’ bill I was not surprised to see testimony by both Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Abuse (MCASA) and Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV); however, I was surprised to see that each seems to presume to speak for all women who have suffered from domestic violence. Insinuating that all victims of domestic violence agree with their pro-abortion position and see limitations to abortion as a hindrance to escaping their abusive situation.

I personally do not believe this is the case. I would cite the primary difficulty of escaping an abusive relationship is failure of the law and its application within the legal system itself. Though it espouses help, the system does very little to provide lasting help that will allow a victim to escape an abuser permanently. Only the members of this body have the power to change these legal deficiencies and, in turn, the legal system must actively enforce the law. Instead victims are offered abortion as a preeminent option, an option which will often leave them even more emotionally and perhaps physically scarred.

“Termination” of a pregnancy based on the premise that the fetus is part of a woman’s body offers flawed logic. A woman would not voluntarily terminate her heart, lungs, legs or any other part of her anatomy. The only logical reason for such a “termination” is that a baby is not an actual part of her own body but something unique and separate that can be removed at no expected cost to her own life.

You have every right to your opinion and I can respect members of both sides of the aisle who are honest about what they believe. As an American you have that right and you also have the right to have your life

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protected. Won't you uphold the same right for all citizens of your state? To set the record straight, many abused women believe as I do and would never consider abortion as an option no matter what their situation was. Maryland has the 3rd most progressive abortion laws in the country, there is no need for an Amendment to make the abortion a constitutional "right" please vote **NO**.