I am writing to oppose the inclusion of HB705/SB798 in the state constitution, as this amendment would enshrine abortion as a "fundamental right" and would require Maryland taxpayers to fund all abortions, regardless of whether a majority of Marylanders support this or not. The amendment would also force healthcare providers to participate in abortions, which could violate their rights of conscience and religious freedom. Additionally, if this bill passes, it could infringe on the freedom of speech guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution by preventing future attempts to pass legislation that could save lives, such as partial-birth abortion or dismemberment bans.

Maryland's current laws on abortion are already very permissive. The Maryland Freedom of Choice Act of 1991 allows for abortion-on-demand up until birth, which is extreme compared to other states. Additionally, Maryland is one of only four states that requires taxpayers to pay for other people's abortions, and one of only three states that shields abortion providers from liability by refusing to report abortion data to the CDC. As a result, Maryland is not addressing important issues related to women's reproductive health, such as the risks of abortion-related maternal injury or death, future miscarriage, pre-term birth, or loss of fertility.

If this amendment were to be enacted, it could threaten the existence of pro-life pregnancy centers and could take away medical providers' rights of conscience. However, Maryland lawmakers still have the ability to pass laws to protect women's health during pregnancy, to restrict abortion after viability, and to ban public funding for abortion. This proposed Abortion Amendment would remove the ability of elected representatives to regulate abortion and would force taxpayers to fully fund all abortions, which is extreme and should not be included in the state constitution. Therefore, I urge you to issue an unfavorable report on HB705/SB798.

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