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Support
HB 705 – Declaration of Rights - Right to Reproductive Freedom
House Health and Government Operations Committee
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My name is Lorraine Layman, a resident of Baltimore Md, and I support HB 705 – Declaration of Rights - Right to Reproductive Freedom. This bill would lay the groundwork to make reproductive freedom—the decision to continue, prevent, or end one’s own pregnancy—a constitutional right.

About 15 years ago, I was pregnant, and initially, I was excited. I posted the sonogram to social media. I told family members. But something wasn’t right.

That something was my abusive partner. When you’re in a relationship, you can’t always see the big picture. When I posted those photos, when I was telling family, I wasn’t seeing the big picture. Then I had the opportunity to think about it.

If this is the way he treated me, how was he going to treat a child? I couldn’t bring a child into the world just to suffer the abuse I was suffering.

Thankfully, reproductive coercion wasn’t one of the ways he was abusive. He even went so far as to recommend an abortion clinic and pay for the procedure. How did he know about the provider? He had impregnated someone else recently and paid for her procedure, as well.

Not every abuse victim has the outlets I had. It’s not hard for me to imagine a world where my former partner’s abuse extended to reproductive coercion. It’s not hard for me to imagine a world where he withheld money. This is the sad reality for too many Marylanders.

We need to live in a Maryland where abuse victims have complete autonomy over their own reproductive future. Making sure that access to abortion, or access to birth control, or access to pre-natal care, is a basic constitutional right, will give more options to victims and fewer options to the people who want to control them.

For the foregoing reasons, I urge a favorable report on HB 705. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.