



Opposition Statement HB588

Health Insurance - Qualified Resident Enrollment Program
(Access to Care Act)

Deborah Brocato, Legislative Consultant
Maryland Right to Life

We oppose HB588

On behalf of our 200,000 followers across the state, Maryland Right to Life respectfully objects to HB588. The bill is expanding the enrollment of participants into the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange Fund which would increase funding for abortion providers. Maryland Right to Life requests an amendment to exclude abortion funding and any abortion access from the application of this bill.

The Maryland Department of Health continues to fail pregnant women and girls in Maryland and appropriations would be withheld until the Department provides the annual report to the Centers for Disease Control to measure the number of abortions committed each year in Maryland, abortion reasons, funding sources and related health complications or injuries. Adding new enrollees who happen to be non-citizens to a program that promotes abortion services without existing oversight is reckless and irresponsible.

- The Department routinely fails to enforce existing state health and safety regulations of abortion clinics, even after 2 women were near fatally injured in botched abortions.
- The Department has routinely failed to provide women with information and access to abortion alternatives, including the Maryland Safe Haven Program (see Department of Human Services), affordable adoption programs or referral to quality prenatal care and family planning services that do not promote abortion.
- The Department demonstrates systemic bias in favor of abortion providers, engaging in active partnerships with Planned Parenthood and other abortion organizations to implement public programs, curriculum and training.
- The Department is failing to protect women and girls from sexual abuse and sex trafficking by waiving reporting requirements for abortionists, waiving mandatory reporter requirements for abortionists, and failing to regulate abortion practices.
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The state is also neglecting the fact that as much as 65% of abortions are not by choice, but by coercion. The increasing use of the chemical abortion drugs is making coercion easier. Potential for misuse and coercion is high when there is no way to verify who is consuming the medication and whether they do so willingly. Sex traffickers and other abusers welcome the easy availability of chemical abortion drugs via telehealth.



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The Abortion Care Access Act of 2022 took away any semblance of abortion as healthcare by removing the physician requirement. Abortion is not healthcare. Abortion is the violent destruction of a developing human being. Abortion always kills the unborn child and often causes physical and psychological injury to women and girls. Abortion exploits women and girls and enables sexual abusers and sex traffickers to continue their crimes and victimization. Abortion is the leading cause of death in the Black community, and is the greatest human and civil rights abuse of all time.

The 2023 Marist poll once again shows that the majority of Americans oppose taxpayer funding of abortion. 60% of Americans, pro-life and pro-choice, oppose taxpayer funding of abortion. 81% of Americans favor public funds being prioritized for health and family planning services which aim to save the lives of mothers and their children, including programs to improve pregnancy and delivery outcomes, well baby care, and parenting classes.

Maryland needs to protect women and girls, citizens and non-citizens, from the predatory practices of the abortion industry. Do not subject more women and girls to the dangers of the abortion industry. Maryland Right to Life urges the addition of an amendment to exclude abortion purposes, including the prescription and distribution of chemical abortion drugs from the application of this bill. If you cannot remove the expansion of abortion access, we ask you to reject the bill in its entirety.

Without exclusion of abortion service and abortion funding, we oppose **HB588**.