

This is my written testimony opposing HB705, the State Constitutional Abortion Amendment. I support the protection of human life at every stage and condition. Science tells us that human life exists during the nine months before birth.

Access to abortion is already part of current Maryland law, so implementing a constitutional amendment would be unnecessary. The "Maryland Freedom of Choice Act" (1991) allows abortion-on-demand, for any reason and up until birth. Maryland is one of only four states that forces taxpayers to pay for other people's abortions. Maryland is one of only three states that shield abortionists from liability by refusing to report abortion data to the CDC. As a result, Maryland is failing to address women's reproductive health and the incidents of abortion-related maternal injury and death or risks of future miscarriage, pre-term birth or loss of fertility.

Maryland currently has one of the highest rates of abortion in the country, while a majority of Marylanders believe there should be at least some reasonable restrictions on abortion. Public funding of abortion-on-demand is not supported by a majority of the public. The open-ended wording of HB705/SB798, if enacted by ballot, could even threaten the ability of pro-life pregnancy centers to serve pregnant women in need and deny medical providers their rights of conscience.

Pushing a constitutional amendment for unlimited abortion will further divide our state. This measure may be labeled by some as "progressive", but it would be antithetical to authentic human progress. Real progress is measured not by pitting mother against child, but by expanding the sphere of protection for both.

Our state needs to support both women and their children, starting at conception. This includes life-affirming healthcare and practical resources to address basic needs such as food, housing, work, and childcare that help them and us embrace the gift of life.