



10521 Judicial Drive, Unit 200,
Fairfax, Virginia 22030

(703) 424-6663

info@dflaef.org



Abortion Amendment, House Bill 705 - Unfavorable Declaration of Rights - Right to Reproductive Liberty

My name is John Quinn, and I serve as the Deputy Director of the DFLA Education Fund. Our organization exists to promote a consistent life ethic.

I am also a proud Maryland resident and an even prouder pro-life Democrat. I'd like to begin my testimony by pondering the nature and limits of our rights. This proposed constitutional amendment, especially as it enumerates rights, provides a wonderful opportunity to do so.

None of the treasured rights and freedoms we enjoy as Marylanders give us license to do violence to any other human being. This essential principle of nonviolence is unquestionably fundamental to our system of government and way of life, as it ensures that one person's rights do not snuff out someone else's rights, and it provides this protection in countless circumstances.

Unfortunately, the proposed amendment runs afoul of the principle of nonviolence with one little phrase, namely "end their pregnancy." These three words make this amendment absolutely unacceptable.

What is hiding behind this euphemism about a right to end a pregnancy? Ending a pregnancy certainly seems to include a live birth. It doubtless covers the tragic instances of spontaneous miscarriage. It would also encompass those unobjectionable instances when a viable child needs to be delivered early for the health of either the mother or the child. Finally, those—again tragic—instances wherein medical science currently has the capacity to save the life of the mother, but has not yet discovered how to simultaneously preserve the life of her preborn child fall within this category. None of these pregnancy outcomes provide reason to object to a right to "end a pregnancy."

Yet such a supposed right is deeply objectionable because it sneaks in elective abortion,¹ the deliberate and violent destruction of a preborn child. The way this proposed amendment defines reproductive liberty, as including a right to abortion violence, directly contradicts the principle of nonviolence and thus risks undermining the very foundations of our democracy. Codifying reproductive liberty in this particular way not only celebrates and perpetuates lethal violence, it undermines our whole system of rights.

¹ For the distinction between "elective" and "therapeutic" abortions, see LaQuita Martinez and David Zieve, "[Abortion - Medical: Medlineplus Medical Encyclopedia](#)," MedlinePlus (U.S. National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, December 3, 2020).



10521 Judicial Drive, Unit 200,
Fairfax, Virginia 22030

(703) 424-6663

info@dflaef.org



Perhaps that is why the language of the constitutional amendment explicitly includes a right to end a pregnancy, while the proposed language that would appear on the ballot before voters conveniently omits that phrase. I trust that should this language appear on the ballot, my fellow citizens will reject it, but if they accept it, please notice that they did not vote in favor of abortion nor even the euphemistic right to end a pregnancy. If the Maryland General Assembly would like to put forward an amendment for reproductive justice, it should find constructive, transparent, and nonviolent language with which to do so.

Neither the DFLA Education Fund nor myself as a citizen of Maryland can support this amendment in its current form. As long as this amendment enshrines abortion violence, I urge this Committee and the Maryland House to reject it. The amendment fails to promote reproductive justice, liberty, and equality. The people of Maryland deserve better.

John Quinn

Deputy Director, DFLA Education Fund

10521 Judicial Drive, Suite 200

Fairfax, VA 22030

703.424.6663

john@dflaef.org

