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Support
SB 859 - Reproductive Health Protection Act
Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
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My name is Mady Anderson, I'm 21 years old, and a senior at the University of Houston studying Human Resources Development with a minor in English.

I am juggling multiple things in my life, working my job selling bridal dresses, completing my mandatory 20 hours a week internship, being active and helping run my sorority, all while attending college full time.

I had just come out of a two-year relationship. So, I decided on September 15th, 2021, to take a pregnancy test. I remember taking the first one, and a line had developed immediately even before the control line. I called my friends to bring me more because I was in disbelief. At one point I had five positive tests in front of me.

After seeing multiple positive tests, I talked to my sorority sister about my options before me, and I knew that abortion was more than likely the choice I was going to make. I called Planned Parenthood the next day to schedule my first appointment. The nearest clinic was only five mins away from where I lived. While on the phone, the representative explained and informed me about SB8, which banned abortion after six weeks. The earliest they could bring me in was about a week later. At that moment, I was okay with it because I believed I was only about twelve days along.

My appointment was scheduled for September 23rd. During my appointment, I paid \$150, and after talking to my clinician, I estimated myself to be around four and a half weeks along. To my surprise, I measured in at 10.5/ 11 Weeks. That meant that I couldn't get my abortion in Texas.

I called 20 different clinics after my visit. Yes, 20. I called surrounding states and even as far as the Dakotas; no one could see me right away. The earliest I could be seen was two weeks after. I scheduled my appointment with Jackson Women's Health Organization in Mississippi.

I wasn't ready to tell my parents about my decision, but I had no choice; I needed help. I'm a college student, who took out student loans just to pay for my housing. I was saving for a new car, because any day now my car can break down. I'm fortunate that I worked hard and got a 2k paycheck that would cover the cost, but so much for saving money.

I also knew that because of the “bounty” portion of SB8, anyone I asked would be putting themselves at risk. My regular inner circle wasn’t available. I took a risk talking to my sorority sister because I wasn’t 100% sure about her feelings on abortion.

My dad immediately took off from work. He told his job that he had a family emergency. We drove a total of 720 miles roundtrip and spent 13 hours on the road. The total amount of gas was about \$350, and spent \$200 for one night at a hotel. We only *slept in the room for about 5 hours* before going to my appointment and turning around to drive back home that evening. I had to pay another \$150 for a sonogram during my appointment. I was informed at the MS clinic that they couldn't do my abortion that same day because it wasn't a procedure day. I was frustrated, sleep-deprived, and angry to get the news that I had to return to Mississippi on another day to get my abortion.

My mom was able to find great deals for flight tickets. For the cost of both of us, it was \$450. We flew in at 7 am for my 10 am appointment. I had another sonogram and it measured me at 13 weeks and 5 days. The cost for that visit was \$750. Because I was farther along my pregnancy I had to do a D& E procedure. After my procedure, I waited in the recovery room for about 20 mins, and flew back to Houston that same evening.

Throughout my journey, I missed about 20 hours from work which is equivalent to about \$400, missed three days of school, and 16 hours of my mandatory paid internship program, which is another \$400. I had to wait three weeks from my initial sonogram with Planned Parenthood to finally have my abortion in Mississippi.

I am fortunate to have parents that jumped in and helped me pay for my abortion. SB8 impacted me financially, mentally, and emotionally. Having to travel outside of Texas costs me more than the \$2,000 that I had set aside to buy a new car. Beyond that, my sorority sister, my mother, my father, and the providers at Jackson Women’s Health Organization were all at risk of being sued for helping me.

It is so sad that Texas, the place I call home, doesn't have my back or any pregnant person’s back in this tough situation. With the Reproductive Health Protection Act, Maryland has a chance to step up and have my back. My parents, friends, and health care providers shouldn’t be at risk. But they are. I urge a favorable report on SB 859. Thank you for your time.