



Maryland Community Health System

Committee: Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Bill Number: Senate Bill 859 – Reproductive Health Protection Act

Hearing Date: March 1, 2023

Position: Support

Maryland Community Health System (MCHS) supports *Senate Bill 859 – Reproductive Health Protection Act*. As a network of federally qualified health centers, we want to make sure that Marylanders and providers are protected from attempts to impose criminal, civil, and administrative penalties on Maryland providers and patients regarding legally protected care, including the full range of reproductive health services. Fourteen states have banned abortion since the *Dobbs* decision, and about a dozen more states are expected to ban or severely restrict abortion by the end of the year. Some states are even seeking to restrict access to birth control, so the full range of reproductive health services may be endangered.

These threats are not theoretical. States like Texas, Oklahoma, and Idaho have enacted legislation permitting private citizens to enforce abortion restrictions by suing anyone who has assisted someone in their state. Other states, such as Missouri, are seeking to classify abortion as a homicide for both patient and provider. We need this bill to ensure providers and patients remain safe in Maryland. If we can provide further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.