



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

AFFILIATED WITH NATIONAL AFL-CIO

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SB 859 - Reproductive Health Protection Act Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee March 1, 2023

SUPPORT

**Donna S. Edwards
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Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 859. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of Maryland's 300,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

The Maryland State & DC AFL-CIO believes that everyone should have control over their own personal reproductive healthcare. Our 2022 Convention unanimously approved a resolution in support of defending reproductive healthcare, calling on the government to act by codifying these rights and expanding access to reproductive healthcare services. We have provided the full resolution attached to this testimony.

Threats to reproductive healthcare are threats to workers' economic rights as well. A study by the Institute for Women's Policy Research found that reproductive healthcare bans led to reduced labor force participation and earnings levels, adding up to \$105 billion in costs to state economies. Individual workers' earnings who were impacted by restrictive bans on reproductive healthcare earned \$1,610 less than their counterparts in states without restrictions.¹ The National AFL-CIO has closely tracked the links between states that ban reproductive healthcare choices and states that promote anti-union right to work policies, or oppose Medicaid expansions and minimum wage increases.²

We urge the committee to issue a favorable report.

¹ Institute for Women's Policy Research, "The Costs of Reproductive Health Restrictions: An Economic Case for Ending Harmful State Policies." May 2021.

² AFL-CIO, "Reproductive Rights Are Worker Rights." January 24, 2023.

Maryland State & DC AFL-CIO
2022 Convention
Resolution #14 - Defending Reproductive Rights

WHEREAS, the US Supreme Court has overturned the nearly 50-year-old landmark Roe v Wade decision in which the majority opinion held that there is a fundamental right to privacy that springs from the 1st, 4th, 9th and 14th Amendments to choose whether to continue a pregnancy without excessive government interference, affirming the constitutional right to privacy, which the court has relied on in previous decisions, and

WHEREAS, the Court's decision to overrule Roe and Casey remanding the authority to regulate abortion return to the people and their elected state representatives uprooted decades of precedent and the freedom which millions of Americans have relied on, and

WHEREAS, the Court's decision and Dobbs v Jackson will inevitably jeopardize the health and well-being of millions of people and threatens the economic security and well-being of millions of individuals who should be allowed to decide intimate family planning questions for themselves in consultation with their healthcare providers and others with whom they trust, and

WHEREAS, access to reproductive health gives women the power to make decisions regarding their work lives, their futures and the economic security of their families because the decision about when and whether to bear children is fundamental to the ability to pursue self-sustaining work, and

WHEREAS, the Court's decision is taking our nation backward with at least 26 states having a patchwork of varying restrictive state legal regimes governing access to reproductive health, further solidifying barriers to care in far too many states and opening the door to divisive and socially injurious measures that threaten those who choose not to continue a pregnancy with criminal prosecution and would criminalize the provision of reproductive health potentially including the treatment of miscarriages and ectopic pregnancies, by medical professionals, and

WHEREAS, the Court's opinion not only threatens reproductive freedoms for millions but that the Court's inconsistent contemplation of whether a right even exists in the 14th Amendment jeopardizes other freedoms and rights, and

WHEREAS, the Court's Dobbs decision potentially opens the floodgates to relitigating past Supreme Court precedents that advance fundamental American rights and liberties, including its exceptionally narrow approach to analyze whether people have a right through constitution protection of substantive due process.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Maryland State and D.C. AFL-CIO recognizes the aspiration of people to full rights and justice and the inherent values at stake in this decision of dignity, equal justice, and freedom

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Maryland State in D.C. AFL-CIO will continue its advocacy to protecting Maryland and the District of Columbia's access to reproductive rights and support federal legislation codifying full reproductive rights and expanded access to reproductive healthcare services.