

HB 808/SB 859

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee; Hearing on 3/1/23

Thank you for taking the time to review my written testimony. My name is Christie Pitney and I am a nurse practitioner and nurse-midwife with a telehealth practice here in Maryland. I am here today to request that you support SB 859. It is critical that Maryland pass this bill and put in place strong protections for clinicians who are offering abortion services. As you know, many states are implementing abortion bans that restrict access to this essential healthcare service. Patients from across the country are turning to Maryland and other “haven” states to receive care that they are being denied in their home states. Some of those patients can travel to Maryland but many cannot. Through my practice, I have patients every single day who are looking for access to care, but I have to turn them away because they cannot leave a restricted state. One example that comes to mind is a patient, who was a minor, and her mother who called my practice together requesting that we send medication abortion pills to Florida because the patient had been raped. They could not find access in their area and they could not afford to pay for the abortion, let alone raise a child. When patients are unable to receive these critical services in their home states, we should be there to support them and provide the care they need. In order to do so, it is critical that protections are in place for clinicians so that anti-abortion extremists in the restricted states cannot retaliate. My personal position on the bill is favorable with amendments. I ask that you support SB 859, but that the language be adjusted to further strengthen protections for both patients, regardless of their location, and clinicians who are present in Maryland. I hope this bill passes and we are able to uplift Maryland to be one of the leaders in support of reproductive freedom for our country. Thank you again for taking the time to review this testimony.