

# Christians Advocating for Life in Annapolis 2023

*Working to foster God's vision for human flourishing*

**BILL:** Senate Bill 798 / House Bill 705  
**TITLE:** Declaration of Rights—Right to Reproductive Freedom  
**COMMITTEE:** Senate Finance Committee  
**DATE:** March 1, 2023 1:00 pm  
**WHO:** Cheryl Winterton, Christians Advocating for Life in Annapolis 2023  
**POSITION:** **OPPOSE**

---

Dear Honorable Chair Griffith:

I am writing in opposition of Senate Bill 798, which seeks to add the right to an abortion to the Maryland state constitution.

In 1985 when I was 19 years old, I chose to abort my unborn child. I thought that after terminating my pregnancy my life would go back to normal. It didn't. Psychologically, choosing to abort my unborn child impacted my life forever.

During my appointment with Planned Parenthood, they asked me if I was 100% sure that I wanted to abort my child. I said I was not. The intake nurse told me that I needed to decide because their waiting room was full and if I didn't decide right now it would impact their schedule for the day. I felt pressure from PP and I felt pressure from my boyfriend (the baby's father). I went through with it.

Months later I reflected that I wasn't myself. I didn't "get over it" like I thought I would. I used to be a happy person. Now I was depressed, and faking my happiness so others wouldn't see a change in me. I began suffering from decreased self-esteem, guilt, shame, loneliness, and sleep issues/nightmares that went on for years. After breaking up with that boyfriend, I found myself distrusting men. I also no longer trusted my closest girlfriends who told me to do it. I began displaying abnormal eating behaviors and would binge eat because it made me feel good. When I was 24 I sought counseling with a licensed psychologist. She confirmed that my bouts of depression, binge eating, sleep issues were a dominant psychological consequence of my decision to choose abortion.

As time passed, I worried about not being able to conceive or deliver a child in the future. This fear eventually became reality. I had infertility challenges. When I did finally conceive, I conceived twins, but lost one at 18 weeks. A few years after the birth of my only son, I went through infertility treatments in my attempt to conceive a second child. I miscarried again due to a blighted ovum. When I needed a procedure later to correct these challenges, the OB/GYN confirmed abortion was likely a contributing factor leading to a host of severe reproductive complications including a partial hysterectomy.

To this day, 37 years later, I dream of the child that I will never meet. Every December I think about him/her turning another year older. I imagine by now they would have been married and I would be a grandmother. I imagine he/she would be making a positive impact in our society.

## Christians Advocating for Life in Annapolis 2023

*Working to foster God's vision for human flourishing*

Eventually I sought Christian counseling to process these experiences and now volunteer to support unwed pregnant teens. I have found peace through my relationship with Jesus. However, my choice had a profound impact on me that has lasted decades. If I could go back I wish there had been a resource for me to have heard the pros and cons of choosing to end my child's life. I only received the resource through Planned Parenthood which was "come pay us money and we will erase your mistake". They didn't tell me how the consequence of my choice would last for the rest of my life. I desired truth. I desired love.

I plead with Maryland Legislators, to consider my experience and that these physiological and psychological health effects do occur. I now believe my child and my health was worth protecting. I regret my decision. I believe better support for pregnant moms and informed consent are important issues not addressed by SB 798 and this amendment would make it hard to add these measures seen as "restrictions". This is unacceptable.

Thank you for considering how to better serve women in their reproductive years in Maryland.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cheryl T. Winterton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cheryl T Winterton  
Severn, MD