

POSITION: Favorable SB859 “Reproductive Health Protection Act”
TO: Judicial Proceedings Committee and Finance Committee
DATE: March 1, 2023
FROM: Dr. Mary Helen Spear, Swanton, Garrett County, MD
Mountain Maryland Alliance for Reproductive Freedom (MMARF)

My name is Mary Helen Spear, and I am testifying today on behalf of MMARF, the Mountain Maryland Alliance for Reproductive Freedom, a non-partisan, grassroots organization of people in Allegany and Garrett Counties, committed to assuring and expanding reproductive healthcare and freedom to residents in rural Mountain Maryland.

SB859 provides important protection to all Marylanders but is particularly important to residents of Garrett County. Our representatives to the state legislature often speak as if the residents of Mountain Maryland are all against abortion and other reproductive rights and freedoms. That’s just not true! Support is extensive and growing for accessible, affordable, and local reproductive healthcare as well as readily available information on all legally available options.

With West Virginia on our western, southern, and eastern borders and the West Virginia abortion ban, Garrett Countians will see an influx of others coming through our county to secure reproductive healthcare services in downstate Maryland.

If we get our own reproductive healthcare facility in Garrett County, the number of people coming to Mountain Maryland for healthcare will increase dramatically. Compassionate people in Garrett County will help out-of-state visitors get services which are legal in Maryland. Healthcare providers and volunteers who help with transportation, clinic escorting, providing information, possibly even room and board, may be at risk of prosecution by other states.

These Marylanders need to have the protections of a shielding bill.

I ask that you protect these Marylanders by giving SB859 a favorable vote.

Thank you.

