



[www.marylandwomen.org](http://www.marylandwomen.org)

# Maryland Commission for Women

A Commission of the Maryland Department of Human Services

51 Monroe Street, Ste. 1034 – Rockville, Maryland 20850

[www.marylandwomen.org](http://www.marylandwomen.org)

February 22, 2023

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr., Chair  
The Honorable Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair  
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building – 2 East  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

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RE: SB 0859 – Reproductive Health Protection Act

Dear Senator Smith, Senator Waldstreicher and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee:

SB 0859 - the Reproduction Health Protection Act - prohibits a judge from requiring a person to give certain testimony or a statement or to produce evidence in another state for a case involving an alleged violation of the criminal law of the other state relating to legally protected health care. It also prohibits the Governor of Maryland or an agent or employee of the State from surrendering a person to the executive authority of another state or assisting in an interstate investigation for an alleged violation of the laws of the requesting state relating to legally protected health care if the violation would not be a crime in the State of Maryland.

The Maryland Commission for Women urges you to support this legislation.

As you know, the Maryland Commission for Women was established in 1965 and was set in state law in 1971. An office of the Department of Human Services, the Commission is a 25-member advisory board whose duties outlined in its enabling legislation include: study the status of women in our state, recommend methods of overcoming discrimination, recognize women's accomplishments and contributions, and provide informed advice to the executive and legislative branches of government on the issues concerning the women of our state. It is to fulfill this mandate that the Commission writes to you today.

In June 2022, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* and 50 years of legal precedent that leaves abortion policy to the will of individual states. Since then, anti-abortion states have passed bans and restrictions making it difficult, if not impossible, for people to access the care they need which could jeopardize Marylanders who may access care in another state or support someone from another state seeking reproductive care that may be illegal in their home state.

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We believe the health care decisions someone makes about their own body should be between a person and their doctor. This bill protects Marylanders – both patients and providers – from criminal, civil, and administrative penalties. In the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court made it clear that reproductive laws should be determined by individual states and those elected by the individuals in those states. Therefore, it is critical that Maryland ensure that all residents of the state are protected by our state's laws.

The Maryland Commission for Women requests your support for this bill and the protection of Marylanders who are accessing or supporting the access of care that is legal in the state.

With very best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tawanda Bailey', written in a cursive style.

Tawanda Bailey, Chair  
Maryland Commission for Women

*Please note that the positions expressed in this letter are those of the Maryland Commission for Women and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Governor or the Department of Human Services.*