



Committee: Judiciary Committee

Bill Number: House Bill 4 - Criminal Law - Sexual Crimes - Repeal of Spousal Defense

Hearing: January 19, 2023

Position: Support

The Maryland Affiliate of the American College of Nurse Midwives strongly supports *House Bill 4 – Criminal Law - Sexual Crimes - Repeal of Spousal Defense*. The legislation would eliminate the use spousal defense in case of rape or sexual offenses. As midwives, we support our patients throughout their reproductive health life span. We counsel them that they have autonomy to make their own decisions regarding health, including their sexual health. It is deeply concerning that Maryland still allows spouses to use their marital status as defense if charged with rape or other sexual offenses. We cannot allow this practice to continue. In 2023, we should not be sending the message to all individuals, and especially women, that they lose their most basic legal rights with marriage.

We ask for a swift and favorable vote on this legislation. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at (443) 926-3443 or relliott@policypartners.net.