



## Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

### Testimony in Support of SB 859 - The Reproductive Health Protection Act

TO: Delegates Joseline Peña-Melnyk, Chair and Luke Clippinger, Chair and  
Members of the House Health and Government Operations and Judiciary Committees  
FROM: Kari Alperovitz-Bichell, MD MPH, Advocate for Reproductive Health Care Rights  
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland,  
DATE: March 28, 2023

I am Kari Alperovitz-Bichell, MD representing both myself, as a physician, and also representing the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland.

We urge your support for SB 859 - The Reproductive Health Protection Act, which would protect medical providers, patients, and their support networks from out-of-state investigations for needed reproductive healthcare. We had hoped that this bill would be amended to include shielding for gender affirming care.

This is a somewhat complex bill, but from both my medical and my faith perspectives, all of its provisions are very important.

As a primary care physician who provides reproductive health services, I am quite worried that fear of out-of-state lawsuits, prosecutions, and investigations will soon have a chilling effect on provision of needed health care services in Maryland. Physicians ought to be able to focus on providing the best treatment possible for every patient seeking our care, rather than worrying about whether a patient might have “snuck in” from some other state, and that caring for them will put us at risk for criminal prosecution or financial ruin. Furthermore, scarce healthcare resources in Maryland should not be wasted attempting to determine in which state a patient legally resides.

But more fundamentally for me and my fellow Unitarian Universalists, I am called by the first principle of my faith to affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every human being. Our faith recognizes a universal human need for safe and dignified reproductive health care, a need that does not stop at state lines. And, because we also believe that health care should be available to those in need, including the poor, we strongly support the provisions in this bill that eliminates co-pays and deductibles for abortion care.

Therefore, we urge you to vote yes on SB 859.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kari Alperovitz-Bichell, MD MPH -  
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry Advocate for Health Care Rights

Annapolis, Md District 30A