

NICOLE A. WILLIAMS, ESQ.
Legislative District 22
Prince George's County

DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

Judiciary Committee

Chair, Public Safety Subcommittee

Vice Chair, Prince George's
County House Delegation



Annapolis Office
The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 207
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
301-858-3058 · 410-841-3058
800-492-7122 Ext. 3058
Nicole.Williams@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 8, 2023

The Honorable Delegate Luke Clippinger

Chairman of the House Judiciary

Committee 6 Bladen Street, Room 101

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

House Bill 808

Good afternoon, Chair Clippinger, Vice-Chair Moon, and members of the House Judiciary Committee. I am Delegate Nicole Williams of District 22, and I will be testifying today in favor of **HB0808**, also known as the **Reproductive Health Protection Act**. This bill increases protections for health care providers, out-of-state patients seeking reproductive health care, and people supporting them, from criminal, civil and administrative liability in other states.

Until last year, anyone born after 1973 had never known a United States in which the right to an abortion was not constitutionally protected. With the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, we are entering an unprecedented time for persons of reproductive age.

This has made it necessary for state legislatures to step up and implement new protections that take into account the attacks we are seeing across the country against abortion care. Many states have already begun to change their laws, resulting in what is being called a “patchwork” of vastly different abortion care laws throughout the country. With 24 states having already banned or preparing to ban abortion care, about 34 million people of reproductive age will be left without full bodily autonomy and access to critical health care in their states.

Additionally, we have seen other states using roundabout legal methods to expand the enforcement of their bans, like SB0008 in Texas which gave citizens the authority to enforce their laws by suing anyone who helps another person receive abortion care. Missouri lawmakers attempted to pass a similar bill in 2022 that would have explicitly allowed citizens to sue

NICOLE A. WILLIAMS, ESQ.
Legislative District 22
Prince George's County

DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

Judiciary Committee

Chair, Public Safety Subcommittee

Vice Chair, Prince George's
County House Delegation



Annapolis Office
The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 207
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
301-858-3058 · 410-841-3058
800-492-7122 Ext. 3058
Nicole.Williams@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

out-of-state individuals or health care providers who aided in abortion care. These kinds of legislation attempts by other states to further control their citizen's bodily autonomy make it risky for Marylanders to treat or support out-of-state patients.

Research has shown that bans do not reduce the need for abortion care, but instead increase the risks that people experience in seeking such care. We should not expect people from states where abortion care is banned, or access is severely limited, to stop seeking abortion care all together. Those who are seeking care will travel to states where it is legal if they have the means to do so. This is why 14 states and the District of Columbia have already enacted similar legislation to HB0808 in preparation for surges of out-of-state individuals that we have already seen here in Maryland.

Our neighbor, West Virginia, has enacted some of the harshest abortion care ban laws in the country. You will hear from providers how these laws have affected their medical practice and work. Maryland is the only state bordering West Virginia that allows abortion care and has bolstered accessibility through legislative protections. That means Maryland will become, and is, a primary refuge state for West Virginians seeking abortion care, and we need to ensure that providers can continue to practice safe and legal reproductive care without fear of retaliation from other states.

By passing this bill we can make clear that we stand with individuals seeking the care they need and want, those who assist them, as well as health care providers. We will not let other states compromise that care in order to enforce their own agendas. We will stand up for our values as a state.

For these reasons I urge the committee to give a favorable report on HB0808.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicole A. Williams, Esq." in a cursive script.

Delegate Nicole A. Williams, Esq.