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WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Senate Bill 859 - Reproductive Health Protection Act

Judiciary Committee

March 28, 2023

Background: Senate Bill 859 (SB859) would create shielding laws so that other states could not access information of individuals who seek abortion care in Maryland from outside states, therefore protecting them from criminal, civil and administrative liability from their home state. It would also protect that person's healthcare providers, support organizations, etc. from those liabilities.

Written Comments: The Baltimore Jewish Council's position in support of reproductive freedom is clear: "The Baltimore Jewish Council opposes government interference with the decision of a woman, in voluntary consultation with her family, her doctor, or her clergy, to determine all aspects of her reproductive life." Jewish law is also clear that when the life of the mother is at stake, Jewish law not only permits, but also actually compels, the mother to abort the fetus to save her own life.

This community consensus statement was adopted nearly 40 years ago by the Baltimore Jewish Council, and it continues to govern our actions.

While Maryland legislators have enshrined many protections of reproductive rights into law, the Baltimore Jewish Council will continue to support governmental efforts to protect reproductive rights in accordance with our long-standing policy.

For these reasons we ask for a favorable report on SB859.

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.