

I strongly urge you to vote NO on SB859/HB808, which enables abortionists to traffic and exploit women for profit. By enacting this legislation, the Maryland General Assembly will become a state-sponsor of interstate human trafficking, will aid and abet sex traffickers and will recklessly disregard your duty to provide for the public welfare of residents and non-residents alike.

Article IV of the Constitution of the United States requires states to help enforce civil judgments by other states. This bill not only attempts to circumvent the Constitution but would enact a severe financial penalty to deter individuals from complying with Constitutional provisions.

Abortion Shield Laws Aids Sex Traffickers. - The connection between abortion and sex-trafficking cannot be denied. Both are an affront to human dignity, and both are profiting from human suffering. Doctors who exploit women for sex and abortion centers that turn a blind eye for profit, enable the sex-trafficking industry. Several undercover investigations have documented Planned Parenthood's failure to report rape, as well as its aiding and abetting of sex-trafficking.

A ground-breaking study by the Beazley Institute found 66 human-trafficking survivors had a total of 114 abortions — 114 abortions among 66 women. A majority indicated that coercion played a role in at least one of their abortions. Two-thirds of trafficking survivors in the Beazley study had their abortions in clinics; nearly 30 percent said they went to Planned Parenthood. One survivor who endured six abortions recounted:

"I was under serious pressure from my pimps to abort the babies. I got pregnant six times and had six abortions during this time. Several of them were from a doctor who was a client — he did them backdoor. ... At least one of my abortions was from Planned Parenthood because they didn't ask any questions. ... You went backdoor where the charge was more like \$150."

Human-trafficking is a \$150 billion per year global industry, the second-most profitable form of transnational crime after drug trafficking. It most frequently takes the form of sex-trafficking, which rakes in an estimated \$99 billion per year. A study by the Urban Institute that interviewed pimps and traffickers found they can make anywhere from \$5,000 to \$32,833 a week. Women and girls make up 71 percent of their victims.

Abortion Shield Laws Hurt Women. Abortion will never be accepted as legitimate healthcare while the state fails to assign to abortion practices, the medical standards of care that apply to all other health care services. The state has a duty under the Commercial Law Article and the Health Occupations Article, to protect consumers from dangerous products and to implement medical standards and disciplinary measures for individuals licensed or certified to provide health services. Instead, this bill would shield negligent abortion providers and unregulated abortion drug manufacturers from liability for any harm or death caused to women.

Abortion is Unsafe for Women in Maryland. Through the enactment of the Maryland Abortion Care Access Act of 2022, the Maryland General Assembly has removed abortion from the

spectrum of healthcare by repealing the requirement that only a licensed physician may perform abortion. Now any “certified provider” may provide chemical or surgical abortion through birth. Physicians now serve only a tangential role on paper if at all, either as remote medical directors for abortion clinics or as remote prescribers of abortion pills. As a result of these pernicious policies, the practice of abortion in Maryland has become the “red light district” of medicine, populated by dangerous, substandard providers.

Chemical Abortion Drugs are Unsafe. Through “telabortion” and the unregulated proliferation of abortion drugs, the abortion industry itself has exposed women to “back alley” style abortions, where they bleed alone without medical supervision or assistance, then flush their babies down toilets. Chemical abortion pills are 4 times more dangerous than surgical abortion and emergency room visits related to abortion pill complications has increased by 500% since the drugs were first approved for use in abortion.

Abortion Regulation Protects Women. Common sense regulations of abortion practices protect women and girls seeking abortion in multiple ways. Abortion restrictions and safeguards protect women and girls from abortion coercion at the hands of abusive partners, sex traffickers and other authority figures. Reporting requirements allow the state to measure not only the correlation between abortion and risks to maternal and infant health, but also to measure the extent to which the state is meeting the legitimate healthcare needs of women and families. Maryland is one of only three states that shield the abortionists by waiving abortion reporting requirements to the Centers for Disease Control.

MDH is Failing Pregnant Women and Families - The Maryland Department of Health has consistently failed to meet the needs of pregnant women and families in Maryland and any appropriation should be withheld until the Department provides the annual report to the Centers for Disease Control to measure the number of abortions committed each year in Maryland, abortion reasons, funding sources and related health complications or injuries. The Department is failing to protect women and girls from sexual abuse and sex trafficking by waiving annual reporting requirements for abortionists, waiving mandatory reporter requirements for abortionists, and failing to regulate abortion practices.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge an unfavorable report on SB859/HB808. The State of Maryland must provide safeguards in law to protect women from abortion exploitation and interstate sex trafficking.

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