



Delaware-Maryland Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Testimony Prepared for the
Finance Committee
on
Senate Bill 798
March 1, 2023
Position: **Favorable**

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to support reproductive health care and a right inherent to human dignity. I am Lee Hudson, assistant to the bishop for public policy in the Delaware-Maryland Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, a faith community with congregations in three synods in every part of our State.

In 1991 our community decided that medical decisions appropriately reside with those affected, accessing the best credentialed resources available to them from their immediate communities. There are so many consequential decisions assigned to medical care and treatment that excessive state interest in its practices and procedures compromises any working understanding of a “pursuit of liberty;” to include rights commonly reserved for any person.

Our understanding of “human” and “right” continues to support medical decision-making by clients for medical practices. Reproductive decision-making belongs with the affected, within their circumstances and concerns. It is always a consequential decision, but the body, life, and agency of the actor reside in the choice to be made.

That right is well-anchored in Maryland law. The question contemplated by **Senate Bill 798** (and *House Bill 705*) is whether the people of the State shall have the right to enumerate it in the State’s formal charter.

Post-Dobbs policies and legal actions indicate there is the intent to script reproductive medical standards of care *via* federal courts and legislation. Maryland citizens ought to have a right to retain the kind of medical consultation and care they may need or want. They could do so with their votes. They also ought to have a choice.

We therefore support the adoption of **Senate Bill 798**.

Lee Hudson