

POSITION: Favorable HB 808 "Reproductive Health Protection Act
TO: Health and Government Operations Committee
DATE: Hearing 3/8 @ 1pm
FROM: Dr. Judy Stone, Mountain Maryland Alliance for Reproductive Freedom

My name is Dr. Judy Stone. I live in Cumberland Maryland. I'm a physician, and have practiced for 40 years. I'm testifying today for the *Mountain Maryland Alliance for Reproductive Freedom*, a non-partisan, grassroots organization of people in Allegany and Garrett Counties who are committed to assuring and expanding reproductive healthcare and freedom in rural Mountain Maryland.

I strongly believe that healthcare decisions must be between a patient and his/her physician alone — and that these healthcare discussions and decisions must be shielded from disclosure, and the threat of disclosure.

I have cared for women who have had serious infections from a botched abortion, and poor women who had to travel for hours to obtain a safe abortion in Baltimore. I'm aware of women who were forced to carry and deliver fetuses with fatal abnormalities, because local hospitals refused to allow a late-term termination.

Some years ago, I strongly opposed the merger of Sacred Heart and Memorial Hospitals because that would have put all health care under the restrictions of the Catholic church. This would have prohibited not only abortions, but vital contraceptives, tubal ligations, HIV and STD counseling, and my clinical research on new antibiotics.

Health decisions are profoundly personal and demand utmost privacy. They should not be dictated by others, and they certainly should not to be influenced by the risk that providers and caregivers—or the patients themselves--could be sued or prosecuted in another state.

This is particularly important in Western Maryland, where compassionate people will help out-of-state visitors receive legal abortion and other reproductive healthcare. These Marylanders need to have the protections of a shielding bill.

Our representatives to the state legislature do not accurately represent the views of many Western Maryland residents who do support having accessible, affordable, comprehensive reproductive healthcare locally.

I urge you to support HB 808. Thank you.

