



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

DAWN LUEDTKE
COUNCILMEMBER
DISTRICT 7

March 5, 2024

The Honorable Senator Pamela Beidle
Chair, Finance Committee
3 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Senate Bill 975, *Public Safety – Reproductive Health Care Clinic Security Grant Program – Establishment (Supporting Reproductive Health Care Clinics Act)*

Dear Chair Beidle:

I write to you today in strong support of Senate Bill 975, *Supporting Reproductive Health Care Clinics Act*, which would establish the Reproductive Health Care Clinic Security Grant Program in the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services to assist reproductive health care clinics in the State with costs associated with security improvements and safety operational expenses. This bill would also authorize the Governor to include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of \$500,000 to the Program.

The Freedom of Access to Clinical Entrances Act (FACE Act) (18 U.S.C. §248) legislation co-sponsored by Montgomery County's former Congresswoman Connie Morella (R-MD) helped to decrease instances of violent action, along with other disruptive tactics at reproductive health clinics across the United States. Sadly, in the aftermath of the 2016 Presidential Election, instances of death threats or threats of harm along with claims that could be brought under the FACE Act have increased.¹² In addition to providing abortions, these clinics also provide access to gender-affirming care and a host of other health care services. Between 2020 and 2022, the number of verified incidents of hate bias based on gender identity that have been reported to law enforcement has increased by 200%, and the number based on anti-LGBTQ bias has increased by 60%.³

This legislation is a common sense and warranted response to the unfortunate reality in which we find ourselves. With reproductive health care under attack, we must take appropriate and necessary action to protect health care workers and patients to ensure that this lifesaving medical care remains safe and accessible.

I strongly urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 975.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dawn Luedtke".

Dawn Luedtke
Councilmember, District 7
Montgomery County
cc: Members of the Finance Committee

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/may/07/abortion-clinic-protests-stats-2017-surge>

² <https://prochoice.org/wp-content/uploads/2017-NAF-Violence-and-Disruption-Statistics.pdf>

³ <https://mcac.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/2022-Maryland-Hate-Bias-Report.pdf>