

SB 862 Favorable
MD

Maria Hayden, Ellicott City

I am an RN, a Vascular Access Specialist.

In a time when personal autonomy and freedom are so highly valued, particularly in health care decisions, SB862 is immensely important. We do not stand for a vulnerable person to be coerced into a surgical procedure or a medical regime, especially one with potentially harmful complications, in any area outside women's health. But in the case of abortion, there are no safeguards against coercion.

Of course, any other invasive procedure in a hospital or facility requires an informed consent, carefully outlining the procedure's rationale and risks and stating the patient's understanding and authorization. Since no such requirement exists in Maryland to procure a surgical or chemical abortion, gaping opportunities exist for abuse by anyone who may not want a baby to be born: boyfriends, parents, educators, landlords, employers, social services, sex traffickers.

Abortion should not only be held to the same standard as other medical decisions but consent is even more needed since there are these strong forces pushing women into a life-changing event that could be emotionally scarring and physically harming. We know nearly 75% of women who have an abortion felt pressured. We need at a minimum to screen for coercion and abuse.

On admission to a hospital patients are questioned on the safety of their relationships at home. We are screened for domestic violence when we have a physical. In health care we are required by law to report any suspected neglect or abuse. It is only reasonable that abortion facility employees do the same.

Waiting periods for abortions are certainly needed. Private interviews are a must. The posting of signs is more than reasonable. Women deserve to know their rights and how to get help out of their situation.

Because of our lack of safeguards, Maryland will attract out of state traffickers avoiding their own state laws. Without the passage of SB862 women are at high risk for this exploitation, injustice and abuse.

We in MD, cannot say we care about women and then NOT at bring this bill to a vote by the entire Maryland legislature and pass it.

Women who want to bear their children should never be threatened with any form of violence, discrimination or abandonment to have an abortion. It should be illegal.