



Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee

Bill: House Bill 884 – Public Health – Pregnancy – Coercion (Protecting Pregnant Women Against Coercive Abuse and Human Trafficking)

Hearing Date: March 15, 2024

Position: Oppose

The Maryland Affiliate of American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM) opposes *House Bill 884 – Public Health – Pregnancy – Coercion*. The bill requires facilities that provide abortion care to post signs regarding the illegality of coercing a pregnant person to obtain an abortion. The bill also requires a provider to report any suspected cases of coercion to law enforcement and to wait 24 hours to provide abortion care.

ACNM is deeply concerned about all types of reproductive coercion, including individuals sabotaging their partner’s birth control and pressuring a partner about their decision regarding continuing or terminating a pregnancy. We have studied the literature and have not found that best practice includes signs in provider offices. Providers of pregnancy and reproductive health care should create supportive and private environments that allow people to disclose concerns about intimate partner violence and reproductive coercion. Providers are cautioned to be attuned on how not to alienate people who are not ready to acknowledge intimate partner violence or reproductive coercion.ⁱ

We ask for an unfavorable vote. We are concerned that this bill focuses only on coercion related to abortion, rather than the full range of reproductive coercion. We are also concerned about any legislation that codifies requirements for clinical care. Best practices are always evolving and must be supported by research. If any additional information would be helpful, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

ⁱ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5579411/>