
Planned Parenthood of Maryland

Committee: House Health and Governmental Operations Committee

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

Hearing: March 15, 2024

Position: Oppose

Planned Parenthood of Maryland opposes *House Bill 884 – Public Health – Abortions – Coercion*. We support the autonomy of all people to make reproductive health decisions. Reproductive coercion exists and is a serious problem. Reproductive coercion involves decisions about birth control, protection from sexually transmitted infections, and pregnancy.

We are concerned about the degree to which this bill stigmatizes abortion. Research demonstrates that, “findings in this area do not support the assertion that women are frequently coerced into abortions, but rather, that they are more often coerced into continuing a pregnancy.”ⁱ Stigmatizing abortion, particularly for individuals already facing difficult situations, can lead to psychological distress, as demonstrated by data analyzed from the Turnaway Study.ⁱⁱ

We ask for an unfavorable report. We should focus on supporting evidenced-based strategies that support the reproductive autonomy of people facing coercion. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Erin Bradley at erin.bradley@ppm.care.

ⁱ Grace KT, Anderson JC. Reproductive Coercion: A Systematic Review. *Trauma Violence Abuse*. 2018 Oct;19(4):371-390. doi: 10.1177/1524838016663935. Epub 2016 Aug 16. PMID: 27535921; PMCID: PMC5577387.

ⁱⁱ Biggs MA, Brown K, Foster DG. Perceived abortion stigma and psychological well-being over five years after receiving or being denied an abortion. *PLoS One*. 2020 Jan 29;15(1):e0226417. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0226417. PMID: 31995559; PMCID: PMC6988908.