

Committee: House Health and Government Operation 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 Women’s Law Center of Maryland opposes *House Bill 884 – Public Health – Pregnancy - Coercion*. The bill provides for separate criminal penalties for coercion about abortion care. The bill also sets signage and reporting requirements for facilities that provide abortion care.

The Women’s Law Center of Maryland is opposed to all forms of reproductive coercion which includes pressuring a partner into continuing or terminating a pregnancy as well as sabotaging a person’s attempt to use condoms or birth control. We support legislation that strengthens laws against human trafficking and intimate partner violence. We are concerned about legislation that singles out abortion care. Such legislation marginalizes abortion care. With reproductive coercion, it is more likely that a pregnant individual will be pressured to continue their pregnancy.ⁱ

We ask for an unfavorable vote. If we can provide more information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

ⁱ <https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/committee-opinion/articles/2013/02/reproductive-and-sexual-coercion#:~:text=The%20most%20common%20forms%20of,attempt%20to%20promote%20pregnancy%201>