

Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee

Bill: House Bill 276 – Health – Abortion Data – Submission to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Hearing Date: March 15, 2024

Position: Oppose

The Women’s Law Center of Maryland opposes *House Bill 276 – Health – Abortion Data – Submission to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. The bill would require the Maryland Department of Health to submit abortion data to the Center for Disease Control (CDC). To obtain such data, the Department of Health would have to establish a data collection system for providers to report abortion related information to the Department.

The Women’s Law Center of Maryland is opposed to this legislation for the following reasons:

- **Public Health Data is Already Available:** The bill presumes that there is no information available about pregnancy and abortion rates in Maryland. However, the Guttmacher Institute routinely collects this information and calculates pregnancy-related rates in every state. In addition, the Society for Family Planning has also begun data collection in partnership with providers. The “We Count” reports have tracked the impact of the *Dobbs* decision on the provision of abortion care within each state;
- **Public Health Survey Data is More Accurate:** When analyzing pregnancy-related data, the Guttmacher Institute does not use data from mandated state abortion reporting systems. According to Guttmacher, “abortions are almost always underreported to the state surveillance systems.”ⁱ Instead, Guttmacher uses its own survey data;

- **Intimidating to Patients:** Patient’s fears about the confidentiality of abortion services are very real. Some opponents to abortion have publicized confidential and highly personal information about abortion on websites or to the press. Unfortunately, this creates a uniquely hostile environment for our patients. It is unlike any other environment in which individuals seek healthcare services. Mandated reporting for abortion services, especially since there are no such mandates for other types of health care services, would only add to the concerns of people seeking abortion services.

We ask for an unfavorable report. If any additional information would be helpful, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

The Women’s Law Center of Maryland is a private, non-profit, legal services organization that serves as a leading voice for justice and fairness for women. It advocates for the rights of women through legal assistance to individuals and strategic initiatives to achieve systemic change, working to ensure physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy for women in Maryland.

ⁱ Unintended Pregnancy Rates at the State Level: Estimates for 2002, 2004, 2006, and 2008. Guttmacher Institute