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TESTIMONY ON HB0276 - UNFAVORABLE

Health - Abortion Data - Submission to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

TO: Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee

FROM: Hannah Wilcove, on behalf of Pro-Choice Maryland

My name is Hannah Wilcove. I am a board member of Pro-Choice Maryland Action and serve on the organization's Policy & Endorsements Committee. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Pro-Choice Maryland against HB0276, Health - Abortion Data - Submission to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Since the Supreme Court overturned nearly 50 years of precedent in its 2022 *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* decision, states across the country have pounced on the opportunity to not only restrict or heavily regulate abortion access, but to impede on what was once a constitutionally protected right to privacy in the process. To make matters worse, these extremist politicians are not content to merely control the bodies of people within the bounds of their respective states — they are seeking the private communications, medical data, and even prosecution of people who travel to states like Maryland, where abortion is still accessible. The last thing we should be doing is making it easier for these politicians to carry out their punitive and regressive agenda against people merely seeking health care.

Maryland has long refused to provide abortion data to the CDC, and from 2012 - 2021, we were joined by California, New Hampshire, and New Jersey in that decision. Over the years, however, many more states have chosen not to report full abortion data to the CDC, including Alaska, Louisiana, Oklahoma, West Virginia, and Wisconsin, to name a few. Maryland's Department of Health does not even collect abortion data in the first place, and it is wholly unnecessary to ask them to start now — in fact, it would only be a waste of valuable time and resources.

Proponents of this bill will try to argue that this is a benign or harmless measure meant only to help the country better understand the incidence of abortion across these United States, especially now that this matter is ostensibly left up to the states. Make no mistake: this legislation is not without repercussions. Imagine what a future Trump administration, or any presidential administration influenced by far-right ideologues for that matter, will do with this data.

We should be increasing abortion access in Maryland now that so many people are coming to our state for that express purpose, and this kind of monitoring will have the opposite effect. **On behalf of Pro-Choice Maryland Action, I strongly urge this committee to return an unfavorable report on HB0276.**