



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

KATE STEWART
PRESIDENT
MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL

March 4, 2025

TO: The Honorable Senator Pamela Beidle
Finance Committee

FROM: Kate Stewart
Montgomery County Council President, Councilmember District 4

RE: Senate Bill 848, *Public Health Abortion Grant Program - Establishment*
Support

My name is Kate Stewart and I serve as the Montgomery County Councilmember for District 4 and, currently, sit as the President of the Montgomery County Council. Today, I am speaking on behalf of myself in support of **Senate Bill 848, Public Health Abortion Grant Program.**

Marylanders have made their voices heard by voting favorably for reproductive freedom. With people's fundamental reproductive rights enshrined into our State Constitution, we must protect access to care and establish the Public Health Abortion Grant Program.

Given the current instability with our federal administration and federal funds, community partners that provide reproductive care are facing unease to continue their work without knowing what will happen next. After the *Dobbs* decision, we know that clinical providers have experienced a peak in people seeking services. We must support the work that our providers are doing and the Abortion Grant Program could ease some of their difficulties.

The right to choose is about body autonomy but, unfortunately, oftentimes access to reproductive care becomes a privilege that excludes people who cannot afford medical services. The decision to seek abortion care clinical services can be difficult enough, whether for a person experiencing

intimate partner violence, or for a person whose life is at risk due to medical complications. Regardless of reason, everyone should have the ability to access reproductive care.

Throughout my position this year, I am committed to addressing mental health in our community and understand that, no matter the issue or walk of life, mental health impacts us all. Research has shown that people who are denied access to an abortion experience mental health issues, in addition to experiencing negative mental health outcomes when navigating the barriers to seeking abortion care.¹ With numerous barriers, such as transportation, support systems, and stigma, the financial aspect of seeking clinical abortion services should not be one of them. The great aspect of this bill is that the Abortion Grant Program would use no taxpayer money as it is funded through a surplus of insurance premiums.

For these reasons, I ask that you please support SB 848 to protect Marylanders' reproductive freedom and access to reproductive care.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Stewart". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Councilmember.Stewart@montgomerycountymd.gov

¹ [National Institute of Health](#).