Reproductive Justice Maryland

Committee:	**Senate Finance Committee**
Bill:	**Senate Bill 848 – Public Health - Abortion Grant Program and Establishment**
Hearing Date:	**March 6, 2025**
Position:	**Support**

Reproductive Justice Maryland strongly supports *Senate Bill 848 – Public Health – Abortion Grant Program and Establishment*. The legislation establishes a public health abortion grant program using unspent insurance premium funds for abortion coverage.

In November 2024, 76% of Maryland voters supported Question 1, a constitutional amendment to provide the highest legal protections for reproductive freedom in our state:

> "THAT EVERY PERSON, AS A CENTRAL COMPONENT OF AN INDIVIDUAL'S RIGHTS TO LIBERTY AND EQUALITY, HAS THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT TO REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE ABILITY TO MAKE AND EFFECTUATE DECISIONS TO PREVENT, CONTINUE, OR END ONE'S OWN PREGNANCY."

The right to abortion care does not equate to access. People without sufficient resources still struggle to access abortion care. This year's SB 848 supports the ability of people to "*effectuate decisions*" on abortion care, as envisioned in Question 1.

In our healthcare system, we provide access to care for the uninsured through public health grant programs. However, our system treats abortion care differently because of the legacy of federal restrictions such as the Hyde Amendment. SB 848 recognizes that abortion care *is* healthcare. The legislation creates a public health abortion grant program that is administered by the Maryland Department of Health. The funds will support abortion care for people who are uninsured, underinsured, or afraid to use their insurance for confidentiality reasons.

Reproductive Justice Maryland advocates for reproductive justice and freedom for all people, including those who have face the barriers of structural racism and economic injustice.   We ask for a favorable report on SB 848. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Jakeya Johnson, Executive Director, at jakeya@reproductivejusticemaryland.org.