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March 4, 2025

TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Senate Finance Committee

FROM: The Office of the Attorney General

RE: Senate Bill 0848- Public Health Abortion Grant Program – Establishment-
SUPPORT

The Office of the Attorney General supports Senate Bill 848, a bill that offers a creative solution to a significant funding problem for abortion care providers. An increase in the need for abortion care services and a decrease in access to, and funding for, those services is putting additional strain on an already fragile system. Maryland’s abortion clinics are struggling to remain fully operational due to the decrease in funds and support, and the increased cost of providing care. Many of these clinics depend on donations and resources from abortion funds to fill the financial gaps, but those donations and resources have dried up as priorities have shifted and new issues have arisen nationally. Abortion funds typically cover medical costs, while some abortion funds provide childcare, transportation assistance, meals, doula services, and other support services. Most abortion funds are funded primarily by local donors and grant-making institutions. Abortion funds are also facing a strain on resources, which decreases their ability to provide access, information and resources to those in need.

According to Nadine Finigan-Carr, PhD, MS, research associate professor and director of the Prevention of Adolescent Risks Initiative at the University of Maryland School of Social Work, “In 1982, we had 52 clinics across the state that offered broad-spectrum contraception and abortion, and we’re down to 25. Sixty-seven percent of our counties in Maryland don’t have an abortion clinic.¹” The remaining abortion care clinics are now considering limiting their hours and services or outright closing because of the lack of funding and resources to remain afloat. This, at a time when Maryland providers are performing more abortions than in the past. Recent [numbers](#) from the Guttmacher Institute, a nonprofit focused on reproductive health, found

¹ Face to Face: The Impact of Overturning Roe v. Wade <https://www.umaryland.edu/news/archived-news/june-2022/face-to-face-the-impact-of-overturning-roe-v-wade.php>

that in 2023, Maryland performed more than 38,000 abortions, experiencing a 29% increase compared to 2019. Unfortunately, there is no public grant funding for abortion care.

This bill identifies a sustainable funding source for a newly created Public Health Abortion Grant Program. Under the Affordable Care Act, qualified health plans that offer abortion coverage are required to collect at least \$1 per month from each enrollee. The money is kept in a separate account and can only be used to pay for non-Hyde abortion services. Because the actuarial value of abortion coverage is far less than \$1 per member per month, these segregated accounts have significant surpluses. This bill proposes to transfer 90% of the unspent funds into a newly created Abortion Care Access Fund, which will, through a newly created Public Health Abortion Grant Program, provide grants to abortion clinics and abortion funds that provide direct grants for abortion care clinical services across the state.

The Public Health Abortion Grant Program which will be established under the Department of Health, will provide grants to healthcare providers and abortion funds to pay for the cost of non-Hyde abortion clinical services for individuals without sufficient resources.

Access to abortion care in Maryland is at risk. Without a long-term solution to ensure that abortion care is funded, communities will lose care that is critically needed and a safety net for tens of thousands of people. This bill provides a creative solution for Maryland to take the lead at maintaining equitable abortion care and access for marginalized communities.

We urge a favorable report.

cc: The Honorable Guy Guzzone