



**COMMISSION FOR WOMEN
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CLUSTER**

January 12, 2025
Senator Guzzone
Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB0848 - Public Health Abortion Grant Program - Establishment

Position: **SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Guzzone and Members of the Finance and Budget and Taxation Committees,

On behalf of the Montgomery County Commission for Women, I, Commissioner Lindsey Turnbull, am writing to ask for your support of SB0848 - Public Health Abortion Grant Program - Establishment.

The Public Health Abortion Grant Program would create a state fund to support abortion services, as well as support services, such as travel and child care. This bill would support the newly passed legislation that enshrines reproductive healthcare- including abortion- into the state constitution, in addition to Gov. Wed Moore's shield legislation that protects Marylanders and those from out of state who seek abortion care in Maryland.

This bill creates a state fund to support abortion services as well as practical support services, such as travel and child care. This bill would *not* use any taxpayer money, rather, it would tap into unspent insurance premiums that can only be used for abortion. This bill would transfer unspent funds to the Maryland Department of Health, who would distribute the money to nonprofits across the state that run abortion funds.

Montgomery County Commission for Women advocates for legislation that supports equal access to healthcare. Abortion care is an essential component of reproductive and sexual health. This bill will better position women to make choices that are best for themselves and their families, especially in the post-Roe era. With so many states restricting or banning abortion nationwide, it is also inevitable that Maryland will see an influx of people seeking abortion care that they cannot access at home.

Research shows that access to legal abortion improves women's lives, especially in the areas of education, mental health, income, and long-term career goals. Women of color are disproportionately affected by abortion bans, due to racial and socio-economic barriers to accessing reproductive care. Unhoused persons, LGBTQ+ people, and those who experience intimate partner violence also face additional barriers to accessing abortion care. Nationwide, approximately 60% of abortion patients already have children, and half of those have two or more children. Allowing women to access abortion allows them to best support their families.

Overall, the Commission believes the Public Health Abortion Grant Program gives women and their families the option to choose what is right for them, and it does so with existing surplus money, rather than taxpayer dollars.

We urge a favorable report on SB0848.

Sincerely,

Commissioner Lindsey Turnbull
Member, Policy & Legislative Committee
Montgomery County Commission for Women

