

Tuesday, March 3, 2025

To Hon. Chair Beidle and Honorable Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

We submit this testimony on behalf of Partners in Abortion Care, an independently owned abortion clinic located in College Park, Maryland. We strongly support the passage of SB0848 in order to establish a Public Health Abortion Grant Program, and we urge a favorable report on this bill.

Partners in Abortion Care is one of just a handful of clinics in the country that offer abortion throughout pregnancy, and as such, many of our patients have traveled hundreds of miles for care. Of the mere five later abortion clinics in the country, two are here in Maryland. We see pregnant people in some of the most tragic and desperate situations you can imagine: people losing deeply wanted pregnancies, people experiencing intimate partner and/or sexual violence, and young people that don't learn about their pregnancies until the second or third trimester.

What all of these patients have in common is that they come to Maryland seeking compassionate healthcare that they cannot access closer to home. In fact, Maryland shares a border with West Virginia, a state where there are currently no abortion clinics. **Our state has become a place of refuge where pregnant people can expect to be treated with dignity.** An abortion grant program would provide tangible financial support not only for abortion seekers in Maryland, but also for those forced to travel to Maryland for their care. It would also serve as a model for other states looking to Maryland for leadership in public health policy.

About 90% of our patients are reliant on non-profit organizations that can help pay for the procedure, as well as the additional costs of travel, accommodation, childcare, and other expenses incurred by pregnant people forced to travel hundreds of miles for healthcare. **This philanthropy-based healthcare model is unsustainable and inequitable.** A statewide abortion grant program would ensure that abortion remains accessible, not a luxury reserved only for those who can afford it.

In November 2024, Marylanders overwhelmingly supported the addition of a constitutional amendment protecting abortion rights. **A grant program that funds clinics and abortion seekers would be consistent with public support of abortion care in our state.** Additionally, the grant program utilizes unused funds earmarked for abortion care: it would not cost taxpayers a penny. It is our state's responsibility to employ available funds to expand public health initiatives, especially in light of the fact that federal funding cannot be used for abortion care.

Independently owned abortion clinics provide 58% of all abortions nationwide¹. Despite our crucial role in the abortion access landscape, independent clinics tend to be underfunded, and 76 have been forced to close since Roe v. Wade was overturned in 2022. **The implementation of the Public Health Abortion Grant Program would ensure that Maryland clinics remain operational and can continue to provide essential healthcare.**

With an anti-abortion administration in the White House, **there has never been a more urgent time to protect and expand abortion access.** The establishment of a Public Health Abortion Grant Program will solidify Maryland's role as a national leader in the abortion rights movement, provide crucial financial support to patients and clinics, and actualize Marylanders' support of abortion rights. We urge a favorable report on this bill.

Sincerely,

Morgan Nuzzo CNM

Co-Founder and Executive Director, Partners in Abortion Care

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¹ <https://abortioncarenetwork.org/cnc2024/>