

Subject: Testimony in Support of HB 1007 – Protecting Genetic Privacy

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the Health & Government Operations Committee,

My name is Rebecca Carle, and I am a constituent and an advocate with the Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance (OCRA). I strongly support HB 1007, which would protect Marylanders from genetic discrimination in life, disability, and long-term care insurance. As someone who has a genetic mutation and as an advocate for individuals and families affected by ovarian and other gynecologic cancers, I know firsthand how vital genetic testing can be in saving lives.

Genetic testing provides critical information that empowers individuals to make informed medical decisions, yet the fear of discrimination prevents many from accessing these potentially life-saving tests. This is particularly true for those at risk for hereditary cancers like ovarian cancer, where early detection and preventive care can mean the difference between life and death. No one should have to choose between protecting their health and securing their financial future.

While the federal Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) prohibits genetic discrimination in health insurance, **there is currently no such protection for life, disability, and long-term care insurance.** This gap in the law disproportionately impacts those with a family history of cancer and other hereditary conditions. HB 1007 would ensure that Marylanders can undergo genetic testing without fear of financial repercussions, fostering a healthcare environment that prioritizes prevention and early intervention.

In my 20s, testing positive for the BRCA mutation empowered me to take control of my health and make informed, preventive decisions. Now, in my 30s, with a family to consider, it's deeply unreasonable that this crucial health information could jeopardize my family's financial future. **Those of us who choose to be proactive about our health—ensuring we remain healthy, contributing members of society—should not be penalized for taking responsible, preventive action.** It's time to remove the barriers that punish individuals for prioritizing their well-being.

I urge this committee to support HB 1007 and protect the privacy and well-being of Marylanders seeking to take proactive steps in managing their health. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Carle



Baltimore, Maryland
Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance