

The Honorable Joseline Pena-Melnyk  
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee  
House Office Building, Rm. 241  
11 Bladen St  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: House Bill 1251

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of HB 1251. My name is Kirra Brandon. I am a practicing physician in Maryland and the mother of 5 daughters.

For me, HB1251 speaks to the desire for true informed consent and clear, thorough, unbiased communication between healthcare providers and patients. I have been on both sides of that equation and understand how critically important it is for both patients and healthcare providers. When patients are given all of the information and allowed to make their own choices within the framework of their own values everyone wins.

ACOG recognizes that physicians have an ethical obligation to engage in informed consent based on the fundamental bioethics principle of respect for autonomy. Informed consent is shared-decision making, and extends far beyond a signed piece of paper. Too often and frequently unintentionally, providers do not engage in this process fully. In my own journey to motherhood I heard "this is just how we do it" (when I questioned about alternatives to a particular test), "if I need to do it I'm just doing it" (when I expressed a wish to not have a vacuum assisted or forceps assisted delivery). I know that I am not an exception because I hear from other women all of the time about similar experiences. This bill puts into law what physicians already have an ethical obligation to do, and hopefully will remind all of us to have these important patient-centered conversations and put the decisions back in the hands of the patient, where they truly belong.

I urge you to support HB 1251. This is an excellent way to encourage communication between hospitals, providers and consumers and improve outcomes for all.

Sincerely,

Kirra Brandon MD

