

Testimony in Opposition to HB 0930

By Michael J. New, Ph.D.

Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee. I am a resident of Hyattsville, MD and I speak to you as a concerned citizen in opposition to HB 0930 “Public Health Abortion Grant Program – Establishment.”

I have both a Ph.D. in Political Science and a Masters Degree in Statistics both from Stanford University. I am an Assistant Professor of Practice at the Busch School of Business at the Catholic University of America. I am also a Senior Associate Scholar at the Charlotte Lozier Institute, the research and education arm of the Susan B. Anthony List. I have done academic research on the impact of pro-life laws. Two of my studies on this topic have appeared in *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* which is the top state politics journal in the country.

This piece of legislation would use health insurance premiums from Maryland residents to create an abortion grant program. I will get right to the point. Marylanders are already required to do quite a lot to support legal abortion in this state. We already do too much. We should not have to do anything more. And honestly, we should not have to do anything at all.

For starters, Maryland is one of approximately 18 states whose Medicaid program covers elective abortion.¹ According to the most recent data from the Guttmacher Institute, Maryland taxpayers paid \$5,000,000 for 6,866 abortions in 2015. That represents about 23 percent of the total. Since 2015, Maryland taxpayers have likely had to pay even more money to fund even more abortions. The cost of an abortion has likely risen during the past 10 years. Furthermore, according to the Guttmacher Institute, Maryland’s abortion numbers have increased since 2015.²

Furthermore, there is a substantial body of academic research which shows that when state Medicaid programs cover elective abortions, abortion rates increase.³ As such, it should come as no surprise that the most recent data from the Guttmacher Institute shows that in 2020, 30,750 abortions were performed in Maryland.⁴ Maryland’s abortion rate was 25.9 for every 1,000 women between the ages of 15 and 44.⁵ Overall, according to the Guttmacher Institute, Maryland has the third highest abortion rate in the country.⁶

¹ <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/state-indicator/abortion-under-medicaid>

² <https://data.guttmacher.org/states/trend?state=MD&topics=66&dataset=data>

³ <https://lozierinstitute.org/how-the-legal-status-of-abortion-impacts-abortion-rates/>

⁴ <https://data.guttmacher.org/states/table?state=MD&topics=66&dataset=data>

⁵ <https://data.guttmacher.org/states/table?state=MD&topics=65&dataset=data>

⁶ Calculation by author.

Clearly Maryland's abortion rate is too high. The citizens of Maryland should not have to do anything more to support legal abortion.

Additionally, HB 0930 violates the conscience rights of Marylanders. The conscience rights of Marylanders were already violated by the Abortion Care Access Act of 2022 which forced certain state regulated insurance providers to cover abortions.⁷ HB 0930 would further violate the conscience rights of Marylanders by requiring that health insurance premiums pay for abortions. Regardless of what one thinks about the legality of abortion, Pro-life Marylanders should not be forced to pay for abortions with their health insurance premiums.

Finally, by requiring that part of insurance premiums go to an abortion grant fund, this will increase the cost of health insurance for Maryland residents.

Money for this abortion grant program could be better spent assisting over 40 pregnancy help centers in Maryland which provide life affirming care to pregnant women in need. Maryland should be the free state, not the free abortion state. Please vote against HB 0930.

⁷ <https://umaryland.pressbooks.pub/march/chapter/overview-maryland-abortion-law/>