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March 26, 2025

## **SB 848 - FAV**

Public Health Abortion Grant Program - Establishment

Dear Chair Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Vice-Chair Bonnie Cullison, and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

Secular Maryland supports Senate Bill 848 which establishes a Public Health Abortion Grant Program to provide grants to improve access to abortion care clinical services. Public policy in a pluralistic society should affirm a right for individuals to make their own reproductive choices.

Our freedom to opt out of continuing a pregnancy may conflict with our neighbors' religious beliefs about a claimed elevated status conferred uniquely upon humanity by a claimed deity from the moment of conception. We disagree with those religious beliefs and reject the obligations on our behaviors that are derived from those beliefs. We are skeptical regarding the veracity of those religious beliefs, or we positively reject those religious beliefs as mistaken. We believe there is no supernatural realm, or there is no deity, or that deity has not conferred the specified special status upon humanity. Accordingly we see no overriding and ever-present ethical requirement to refrain from relying on pregnancy prophylactics, or to continue with pregnancy through birth and caring for the child. We instead see a more complex set of context sensitive ethical and practical considerations which may favor decisions that initially help to block, or afterwards abort, a pregnancy.

Our ethics are anchored in, and derived from within, our understanding of how the universe works. The reliability of our ethics depends on the veracity of their factual foundations. And our understanding of how the universe works is derived pragmatically on a best fit with the overall available empirical evidence basis. Logic and reason alone, without the empirical grounding, fails to reliably obtain facts. Our understanding of how the universe works is not anchored in, nor derived from, pre-existing ethics that are pre-defined independently of our understanding of how the universe works.

Respectfully,  
Mathew Goldstein  
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