



**TESTIMONY REGARDING HB0108
Public Health-Abortion (Heartbeat Bill)
UNFAVORABLE**

TO: Chair Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Delegate Bonnie Cullison and all members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee

FROM: Lynn R. Mortoro, member of the Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network. (MEPPN)

DATE: February 27, 2025

Chair Delegate Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison and members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this extremely important bill. I am a retired Registered Nurse, originally from Connecticut. I did not work in Women's Health, but follow rulings closely and am member of the Episcopal Church.

I find it very confusing that the bill is titled a Heartbeat bill and then goes on to state that the purpose is to take away practice privileges concerning abortion care from a highly trained and expert group who give vital care to a special group of women in our community. It then went on to state restrictions on the procedure itself.

In 2022, the Legislature over-rode a veto by then Governor Hogan to pass the bill giving Nurse Practitioners, Physicians Assistants and Midwives the ability with training to do abortion care for pregnant people. This was to address the gaps in care especially among the poor and people of color. It would be a huge mistake to take this away from our health care system.

I am not certain about how the term fetal heartbeat is being used. A recognizable heart is not seen on ultrasound until about 20 weeks. Before that, it's noises that the machine picks up, but is not a functioning heart.

Since 1967, The Episcopal Church has maintained its "unequivocal opposition to any legislation on the part of the national or state governments which would abridge or deny the right of individuals to reach informed decisions [about the termination of pregnancy] and to act upon them."

The Diocese of Maryland requests an **UNFAVORABLE** report on this bill