

February 20, 2025

Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk
Chair, Health and Government Operations
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee:

RE: HB 1007 – Genetic Testing Protection Act
Position: SUPPORT

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide input to you today about House Bill / Senate Bill 1007.

My name is Melanie Lendnal, and I am submitting this testimony as a resident of Montgomery County, Maryland, and someone with a long family history of breast cancer.

Numerous studies have demonstrated that fear of discrimination by insurers is one of the primary reasons people choose not to get a genetic test. Two years ago, I shared with members of this committee that I was one of those people.

Every single woman on my mother's side of my family, going back to my great, great grandmother has been diagnosed with the breast cancer, including most recently my mother.

And while my doctors have encouraged and countless researchers have literally begged me to undergo genetic testing for their studies, I have refused.

I am a mom, and more than anything else I need to know that if anything ever happens to me my two young daughters will be okay. I need to know that whatever insurance I choose to purchase now or in the future will not be out of reach financially.

But decisions can have consequences. One of those is my inability to present this testimony to you in person since just last month I was diagnosed with breast cancer and underwent a bilateral mastectomy. I am still recovering.

This did not have to happen since there are now medical interventions available for those who test positive for genetic breast cancer and so many other genetic diseases. I, along with every other resident of this state should not have had to choose between physical health and financial health. Passing this legislation will ensure no one else is forced to make these difficult decisions again.

I respectfully ask for a favorable report for House Bill 1007. Thank you for time and for your careful consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Melanie Lendnal

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