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Delegate Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk, Chair
House Health and Government Operations Committee
Maryland General Assembly
240 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk,

I am writing today to express my full support for *House Bill 930 - Public Health Abortion Grant Program - Establishment*

The funding mechanism for this grant program was created by the federal Affordable Care Act when it was passed in 2010. With this bill, Congress expanded access to health insurance for millions of Americans through state insurance exchanges. These exchanges, and the carriers who choose to participate, continue to adhere to all federal laws, including the Hyde Amendment, which bars the use of federal funds to pay for abortion.

Section § 1303 of the ACA outlines how qualified health plans will collect, separate, and use premium dollars for abortion services. These plans charge each policyholder \$1 per month and hold it in a separate account that it draws down as it pays for abortion services. Each year there is a surplus in these accounts that, due to their earmarked status, cannot be used for anything but abortion services. Since the opening of the exchange, the surpluses in these state and carrier-specific accounts have been accruing interest. In Maryland alone, the cumulative balance is approximately \$25 million with an additional \$3 million added every year. Since those funds cannot be returned, the legislation reinvests the funding in public health grants for the purpose they were set aside for, abortion care.

Maryland, and other states who support a comprehensive view of women's health, can use these abortion-earmarked funds to alleviate the cost of this medical procedure to those who need it the most while continuing to conform to federal law. As abortion access becomes increasingly difficult due to state bans and uncertain changes coming from the federal executive branch, I am proud that Maryland continues to be a leader in this space.

I strongly urge this committee to give *House Bill 930 - Public Health Abortion Grant Program - Establishment* the highest consideration and I thank you and your committee for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "April McClain Delaney", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

April McClain Delaney
Member of Congress