

Testimony in Opposition to HB 1045

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 1045 “Health Insurance and Family Planning Services – Consumer Protections -- Updates.”

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 is intended to fund family planning programs in Maryland in a circumstance where the Trump administration refuses to allocate Title X family planning funds to entities that perform abortion.

First, it should be clear that Maryland health care facilities will still be eligible for Title X family planning funds, as long as they do not perform abortions. As such, there is no need to allocate or redirect taxpayer funds for family planning.

Second, the only health care facilities that will obtain additional funds through this proposed piece of legislation are those that perform abortions. As such, this bill funds abortions. While, the money may not be allocated for abortions per se -- money is fungible. As such, this piece of legislation will require Maryland taxpayers to fund elective abortions

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 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

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

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

Clearly Maryland's abortion rate is too high. Abortion facilities in Maryland receive too much in the way of taxpayer funds. 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 are already violated by the Abortion Care Access Act of 2022 which forced certain state regulated insurance providers to cover abortions.⁷ The conscience rights of Marylanders are already violated by the fact that our taxpayers dollars already fund elective abortions through the state Medicaid program. HB 1045 would further violate the conscience rights of Marylanders by requiring that additional taxpayer dollars go to health care facilities that perform abortions.

Funds that go to Maryland abortion facilities 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 1045.

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.

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