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WOMEN LEGISLATORS OF MARYLAND
THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

February 24, 2025

To: Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair
Delegate Bonnie Cullison, Vice Chair
Health and Government Operations Committee

The Maryland Women's Caucus is proud to express our unanimous support for **HB1251: Health Care Facilities and Medical Professional Liability Insurers - Obstetric Services Policies (Doula and Birth Policy Transparency Act)**. This critical legislation is a necessary step in ensuring transparency and accountability in obstetric care policies, ultimately improving maternal health outcomes for women across Maryland.

As you are aware, access to clear and comprehensive information about obstetric services is essential for expectant mothers to make informed decisions about their care. However, many women—particularly those from low-income and marginalized communities—face significant barriers in understanding what services are available, what policies govern their care, and how insurance coverage impacts their birthing options. **HB1251** addresses these issues by requiring health care facilities to establish and disclose their obstetric care policies and mandating that medical professional liability insurers provide transparency regarding their coverage policies for obstetric services.

Maryland has made great strides in addressing maternal health disparities, but challenges remain, particularly for Black women and women in underserved areas, who continue to experience higher rates of maternal mortality and adverse birth outcomes. **HB1251** ensures that pregnant individuals have access to critical information about their care, empowering them to make choices that best support their health and well-being. Additionally, this bill strengthens accountability within the health care system, fostering a more patient-centered approach to obstetric services.

Ensuring that every woman in Maryland has access to transparent and equitable obstetric care is not just a matter of health—it is a matter of justice. By improving transparency in obstetric policies and insurance coverage, **HB1251** takes a meaningful step toward reducing maternal health disparities, expanding access to doula support, and fostering greater trust between pregnant individuals and the medical system.

For these reasons, the Maryland Women's Caucus strongly urges the **Health and Government Operations Committee** to issue a **favorable report** for **HB1251**. Thank you for your time and consideration. We appreciate your commitment to improving the lives of Marylanders.