

Maryland General Assembly
Judiciary Committee
226 Lowe House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401



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Favorable Testimony for HB1186

By Patrina Mosley

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I am here today to urge a favorable vote for the **Women's Freedom From Coercion Act**, HB 1186.

In 2013, Remea in Florida was six weeks pregnant when she trusted her boyfriend who said he was giving her "medicine".¹

In 2017, Brooke from Arlington, VA was seventeen weeks pregnant when she realized her boyfriend had drugged her tea.²

In 2019, Jane Doe from California was held at gunpoint by her boyfriend and told to take pills that resulted in her pregnancy loss.³

In 2023, Catherine from Texas was seven weeks pregnant when she became violently ill after drinking a prepared beverage from her husband.⁴

This is just a brief snapshot of the violence against women that happens all the time because someone else wants control over their bodies by any means necessary.⁵ As a woman's advocate in the spaces of human rights and anti-exploitation for over a decade and

a volunteer in my community for survivors of abuse and unplanned pregnancies, I can tell you for a fact that pregnancy increases a woman's risk for violence or worse.

Homicide is a leading cause of death during pregnancy in the United States and intimate partner violence (IPV) often includes reproductive coercion.⁶

In 2020, the risk of homicide was 35% higher for pregnant or postpartum women, compared to women of reproductive age who were not pregnant or postpartum. Compare this to previous years at just 16%. The homicide rates were highest among adolescents and Black women.⁷

At the same time these risks have increased, unfettered access to online abortion-inducing drugs has increased, with one survey finding at least 72 websites selling chemical substances to terminate pregnancies.⁸ A New York Times investigative piece showed just how easy it was for HIM to purchase these drugs.⁹

Times are changing and with “[t]his new accessibility, [it] can and has empowered abusers to have complete control over a [woman’s] pregnancy decision.”¹⁰

This also includes women who are being trafficked; Victims whose bodily autonomy has already been taken away, are re-traumatized. A survey of trafficking survivors found that just amongst 66 trafficked women there were 114 terminated pregnancies.¹¹ Many survivors have given testimony of their reproductive coercion and how they knew they had no choice in the matter. It still haunts them to this day.

When abusers knowingly and willingly poison pregnant women with the intent to take away their choice, this is violence against women and it must be stopped. In none of the cases I read to you, were the abusers held responsible for the violence they committed on the woman alone.

In Maryland, you have a chance to start that.

In 2025, it's time to protect women in the most relevant ways possible, which includes passing the **Women’s Freedom From Coercion Act**.

Thank you.

¹ Mungin, Lateef. (2013). *Man pleads guilty to tricking pregnant girlfriend into taking abortion pill*. CNN. <https://www.cnn.com/2013/09/10/justice/girlfriend-abortion-case/index.html>

² Osborne, Mark. (2018). *Former doctor who slipped abortion drug into girlfriend's tea sentenced to 3 years in prison*. ABC News.

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/doctor-slipped-abortion-drug-girlfriends-tea-sentenced-years/story?id=55280357>

³ Kotowski, Jason. (2019). *'Take these pills or I'm going to kill you,' man told 12 weeks pregnant ex in forcing miscarriage: reports*. KGET.com.

<https://www.kget.com/news/crime-watch/take-these-pills-or-im-going-to-kill-you-man-told-12-weeks-pregnant-ex-in-forcing-miscarriage-reports/>

⁴ Pelisek, Christine. (2024). *How a Pregnant Texas Woman Caught Her Husband Drugging Her Drinks Trying to Induce an Abortion*. People Magazine.

<https://people.com/texas-woman-caught-husband-drugging-drinks-try-induce-abortion-8606001>

⁵ Brown, Christa. (2024). *The startling reality of forced abortion*. Pregnancy Help

News. <https://pregnancyhelpnews.com/the-startling-reality-of-forced-abortion/>; Israel, Melanie. (2023). *Abortion Pills, Coercion, and Abuse*. The Heritage Foundation.

<https://www.heritage.org/life/commentary/abortion-pills-coercion-and-abuse>

⁶ Lawn, R. B., & Koenen, K. C. (2022). *Homicide is a leading cause of death for pregnant women in US*. BMJ (Clinical research ed.), 379, o2499. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.o2499>

⁷ Wallace, ME. (2020). Trends in pregnancy-associated homicide, United States. Am J Public Health DOI: 10.2105/AJPH.2022.306937. <https://www.nichd.nih.gov/newsroom/news/091622-pregnancy-associated-homicide>

⁸ *Fact Sheet: Online Sales of Mifeprex and Misoprostol for Self-Abortion*. (2018). Charlotte Lozier Institute. <https://lozierinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Online-Sales-of-Mifeprex-and-Misoprostol-for-Self-Abortion-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

⁹ Manjoo, Farhad. (2019). *Abortion Pills Should Be Everywhere*. New York Times.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/03/opinion/abortion-pill.html>

¹⁰ Christa Brown BSN, RN. Pregnancy Help News.

¹¹ Lederer, Laura J., Christopher A. Wetzel (2014). *Victims Health Survey – Health Consequences of Sex Trafficking*. <https://www.globalcenturion.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/The-Health-Consequences-of-Sex-Trafficking.pdf>

