

Hearing 2/27 at 1:00 p.m.
Senate Finance Committee

Health, Health Insurance, and Health Occupations - Perinatal Mental Health Conditions
(SB0891)

Position: Favorable

Chair Beidle and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Samantha Royson, and I write this letter in strong **support** of SB0891, Health, Health Insurance, and Health Occupations - Perinatal Mental Health Conditions. This bill would expand perinatal mental health screenings and require patient and provider training related to perinatal mental health. In short, this bill will save lives.

As a clinical social worker in the maternal health space, as well as a mother, I understand how important perinatal mental health screening and education can be. Before I gave birth to my son, I would often educate patients about their risks and protective factors for perinatal mental health conditions. However, when it was me who was the patient, I expected that I would be “safe” from any concerns because I am knowledgeable, I am trained, I am experienced in this. That was not the case. I experienced symptoms of postpartum anxiety and OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder) including scary thoughts of falling down the stairs of my home with my infant, accidentally smothering them in too many layers of clothing, and getting into a terrible car accident when we left the house. Screening for these changes in mood, educating patients about their risk and protective factors for these conditions, can quite literally save the life of mother and child. For this to be effective, medical providers need to be educated with this important knowledge so that they can share it with their patients. They need to feel confident and comfortable discussing these conditions, as they do hypertension or diabetes.

Mothers, children, families, and communities in Maryland would greatly benefit from the passage of this bill. As such, I ask for a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Samantha Royson, LCSW-C, PMH-C
Clinical Perinatal Social Worker & Mother
6508 Glenoak Ave Baltimore MD 21214
Samantha.royson@gmail.com