

HB 1143: Public Health - Office of the Chief Medical Examiner - Perinatal Autopsies (Lung Float Test Ban): Please vote to **OPPOSE** this bill.

Dear Finance Committee:

I am writing to strongly urge you to **OPPOSE HB 1143**.

While concerns about certain forensic techniques are understandable, banning a long-established method like the lung float test is premature and risks undermining the accuracy and reliability of perinatal death investigations. The lung float test remains a tool in the forensic pathologist's toolkit, often combined with other evidence (histology, microbiology, scene investigation) to reach objective conclusions. **Prohibiting its use outright could hinder thorough autopsies in cases involving potential live birth, stillbirth classification, or criminal inquiries (e.g., infanticide or neglect), potentially compromising justice for victims and families seeking answers.**

Legislating specific forensic methods overrides the professional judgment of trained medical examiners and pathologists, who should follow evidence-based standards rather than statutory bans on individual tests. Civil liability and disciplinary provisions tied to this prohibition will impede forensic work, deter qualified pathologists, or lead to politicized lawsuits rather than science-driven outcomes.

Maryland should trust the expertise of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner to use appropriate, validated tools in perinatal autopsies, not impose legislative bans on established techniques without comprehensive evidence of unreliability or harm.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask you to **vote against HB 1143**.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of my concerns regarding this important public health, forensic science, and justice matter.

Sincerely,

Trudy Tibbals