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TESTIMONY ON SB#/0019- POSITION: FAVORABLE

Maryland Commission on Women's Health Advancement – Establishment

TO: Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and members of the Finance Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#/0019, **Maryland Commission on Women's Health Advancement – Establishment**

August 2024 the Maryland Department of Health issued a report Women's Health Action Plan.¹

As part of the Department's broader effort to improve health in Maryland, MDH is announcing its vision to improve women's health—ensuring all women achieve and maintain their highest level of physical, mental, and emotional well-being, and have the agency to make choices regarding their bodies and reproductive and sexual health. The MDH Women's Health Action Plan prioritizes and advances health equity in policies and practice across the lifespan and builds upon existing MDH work from the Statewide Integrated Health Improvement Strategy, Maryland Cancer Control Plan, and Maternal Health Improvement Program Task Force Maternal Health Strategic Plan.

This bill looks at implementation of some of the action plan steps by creating a task force establishing the Maryland Commission on Women's Health Advancement to study the feasibility of establishing a State women's hospital in Southern Maryland and a statewide clinical network to advance women's health. The results of that study will require the Commission by January 1, 2027, to submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an initial action plan, including a timeline, milestones, and specific research objectives; etc.

As delineated in the Health Action Plan proactive steps, this bill will move the process forward in specific geographic areas in Maryland. It will assist Maryland in creating an action plan to implement overall multiple study recommendations statewide.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#/0019.

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https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/mch/Documents/Women%27s%20Health/Womens%20Action%20Plan/2405_PHA_WomensHealthStrategy_Brief.pdf