

Hearing 2/27 at 1:00 p.m.

Senate Finance Committee

Health, Health Insurance, and Health Occupations - Perinatal Mental Health Conditions (SB 891)

Position: Favorable

Chair Beidle and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Kelsey McCarthy and I write this letter in strong support of SB 891 – 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 mother of two, I have experienced firsthand how overwhelming the perinatal period can be. Pregnancy, birth, and the postpartum months bring immense joy, but they also bring exhaustion, hormonal changes, anxiety, and emotional vulnerability. Even with strong support systems and access to healthcare, it can be difficult to recognize when normal adjustment becomes something more serious.

Many mothers are given mental health questionnaires at pediatrician visits asking how they are feeling. While well intentioned, most mothers are unlikely to answer those questions honestly or fully. New mothers are often exhausted, worried about judgment, or unsure whether what they are experiencing is normal. Many do not yet know how to ask for help.

That is why we need trained professionals who can recognize the signs of perinatal mental health conditions, initiate conversations, and guide families toward care. Screening cannot rely solely on self-reporting; it must be supported by provider education and systems designed to identify struggling parents early and compassionately.

Supporting maternal mental health supports entire families. When mothers are healthy, children thrive, families remain stable, and communities are stronger. SB 891 moves Maryland toward a healthcare system that proactively supports parents rather than waiting for them to reach a crisis point.

Moms, families, and communities in Maryland would greatly benefit from the passage of this bill. As such, I respectfully ask for a favorable report on SB 891.

Sincerely,

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