



TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

SB0169: Hospitals- Emergency Pregnancy-Related Medical Conditions- Procedures

POSITION: Support

BY: Linda Kohn, President

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The League of Women Voters of Maryland supports Senate Bill 169: Hospitals- Emergency Pregnancy-Related Medical Conditions- Procedures. The League believes in the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices, and is committed to fight for reproductive rights and justice, including bodily autonomy, reproductive health, and access to contraception and abortion.

The 1986 federal Emergency Medical Treatment & Labor Act (EMTALA) mandates that medical stabilization and treatment be provided to any patient presenting to a hospital Emergency Department with an “emergency medical condition.” This type of emergency is defined as one for which “the lack of immediate medical attention could reasonably be expected to result in placing the health of the patient...in serious jeopardy, [with] significant impairment to bodily functions, or serious dysfunction of any bodily organ or part.”¹

In the 2024 Supreme Court case U.S. v. Idaho, that state’s law banning abortions unless necessary to save the life of the mother conflicted with EMTALA’s mandated treatment to prevent “placing the health of the patient in serious jeopardy.” The League of Women Voters filed an amicus brief in that case, arguing that the federal EMTALA Act superseded Idaho state law. The Supreme Court dismissed the case, thus leaving access to medically necessary emergency medical care, including abortion, uncertain for seriously ill pregnant patients.

Passage of Senate Bill 169, “requiring the hospital to allow the termination of a pregnancy when the termination is medically necessary to stabilize the patient”² would provide an additional layer of legal protection to both patients and medical providers. It would be a strong step to ensure that reproductive health care, including abortion, will remain accessible and legally protected health care in Maryland, regardless of future possible federal actions and decisions.

The League and it’s 2,000 members urge the committee to give a favorable report to Senate Bill 169.

¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK539798/>

² <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2026RS/bills/sb/sb0169f.pdf>