



**Maryland Commission
on LGBTQIA+ Affairs**

Bill Title: Public Health – Abortion (Heartbeat Bill)

Bill Number(s): HB0049

Position: UNFAVORABLE

Date: March 16, 2026

Submitted by: Jeremy Browning, Director of the
Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs

To:

House Health Committee

The Hon. Heather Bagnall, Chair
The Hon. Bonnie Cullison, Vice Chair

Testimony on behalf of the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs:

The Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs respectfully opposes House Bill 0049.

The Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs was established by the Maryland General Assembly to assess the challenges facing LGBTQIA+ Marylanders and to provide recommendations to the Governor, General Assembly, and state agencies on policies that promote equity, safety, and inclusion.

House Bill 0049 would prohibit physicians from performing abortions once a fetal heartbeat is detected and establishes a framework allowing private civil actions against individuals who perform or assist in abortion care. These provisions represent a significant restriction on reproductive health care access and create new legal risks for providers and those supporting patients seeking care.

Policies that prohibit abortion at early stages of pregnancy can effectively eliminate access to care for many individuals, particularly those who may not yet know they are pregnant or who face delays in obtaining medical services. The private civil enforcement structure proposed in this bill also raises concerns about encouraging litigation against providers and others involved in patient care.

These impacts may be particularly harmful for LGBTQIA+ Marylanders, including transgender men and nonbinary individuals who may seek reproductive health services. Many already face barriers to accessing affirming health care and may experience stigma, discrimination, or logistical challenges when seeking services.

The Commission's recent statewide [LGBTQIA+ Community Needs Assessment](#) found that over **47% of respondents experienced obstacles or delays in receiving health care** in Maryland, and **49% reported sometimes or always avoiding medical care due to anticipated discrimination**.

Policies that further restrict access to reproductive health services risk compounding these barriers and discouraging individuals from seeking needed care.

Maryland has taken important steps to protect access to reproductive health care and ensure patients can make decisions about their health in consultation with qualified providers. The Commission believes policies that restrict access to abortion care and introduce private enforcement mechanisms risk undermining those protections and creating additional barriers for individuals seeking care.

For these reasons, the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs respectfully urges an **unfavorable report on House Bill 0049**.

Reference:

Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs. (2026). *Maryland LGBTQIA+ Community Needs Assessment: Preliminary Findings Report* (in partnership with the University of Maryland Eastern Shore).