

Written Testimony in Favor of HB49 Public Health - Abortion (Heartbeat Bill)

March 17, 2026

To: Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the Health Committee

I am submitting written testimony in favor of HB49, Public Health – Abortion (Heartbeat Bill). This bill prohibits induced abortions when a fetal human being's heartbeat is detectable.

This legislation deserves a favorable vote because scientific evidence supports the humanity of the preborn child at this early stage.

Medical research and technology continually reveal new knowledge about pregnancy and fetal development, and a web search of articles and studies about pregnancy discloses the rapid and complex fetal development that occurs from the very beginning of gestation. The human body undergoes more change before birth than at any other stage of development.

To cite an example, research shows that sensory development in utero begins well before birth. This [research is cited](#) in a UT Southwestern Medical Center web article that reports the following:

*“A lot more than just physical development happens during the 40 weeks a baby spends growing in his or her mother’s womb. Not only are babies busy developing physical adaptations to function after birth, they are also eagerly sensing the world around them, **starting from a very early gestational age.**”*

Recent research has focused on the amazing sensory development that occurs long before a baby exits its mother’s womb. Much of this forms the basis of the infant’s early attachment to the mom and begins the long process of its learning about the postnatal world.”

Fetal surgery already can occur [as early as 16 weeks](#). Further research and medical technology development are likely to reveal even more knowledge about pre-birth development that will offer additional evidence of a living being actively interacting with the surrounding environment.

I also would like to offer an ecological perspective that links protection for the preborn with protection of nature. Humanity enjoys a reciprocal relationship with the entire living world and is called to responsibility and good stewardship of this relationship. In Maryland, legislators have honored this reciprocity by enacting significant legislation for environmental protection and stewardship.

Along these lines, I would like to present the following questions for your consideration:

How do we think about abortion in relation to questions of protection of nature, climate, land, water, wildlife, and habitat? Is the fetal development process different from the development process of other aspects of nature? Is the development process of food crops and plants underground before emerging above ground different from the human development process in utero? Does humanity have a reciprocal relationship with and responsibility for good stewardship of the entire living, natural world? Are preborn, developing lives part of the natural world and of this reciprocal relationship, and also deserving of good stewardship? Do we, the currently living who experience the joys and challenges of life and enjoy nature's benefits, have the right to deny this opportunity to new, still-developing lives?

I believe that abortion is inconsistent with and contradictory to protection of nature. It behooves society to also think of preborn, developing lives as part of the living world and this reciprocal relationship. Respect for our natural heritage calls us to be good stewards of the human birth process as well. Just as the seeds of food crops and garden plants go through stages of development underground before emerging, developing human life experiences myriad stages of complex development before birth.

It is our duty as human beings with responsibility for the entire living world to exercise good stewardship in the process of human development leading to birth. And let us remember that every currently living person once existed at these early stages.

I urge a favorable report on HB49 to protect life at this very early stage.

Sincerely,

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