

Testimony in support of House Bill 1451

Dear Delegate McComas and the Health Committee,

My name is Chikamara Ogwo and I am an Anne Arundel County Resident testifying in support of House Bill 1451 – Public Health – Women’s Health Care Data. As a young woman passionate about improving overall health in our communities, I find it imperative and informative to offer my perspective on this bill and wish to advocate for the restricted collection of healthcare data regarding services specific to women. If this bill is passed, the information collected could help state departments adequately allocate funds, develop strategies and policies that would help reduce the burden these services pose to individuals, and encourage more women to seek the aid they need to protect their health. .

For many women, since the SCOTUS overturning of *Roe v Wade* in 2022, the collection of women's healthcare related information (especially for reproductive services) has been a sensitive topic as the intentions of data were never fully disclosed; causing discomfort and misunderstandings about how their medical data will be used. However, the intentions of the data are clearly outlined for the purpose of addressing the healthcare needs of all women and utilizing data to better manage healthcare spending.

According to data published in articles by the World Economic Forum, National Library of Medicine, and American Medical Women’s Association, trends in information reveal that US women are reported to pay more for healthcare services than men, likely as a result of higher healthcare service prices. With the passing of House Bill 1451, this gap in healthcare affordability for women can be properly addressed in a manner that makes healthcare services more accessible by prioritizing proven essential services for women while, collecting individuals medical data such that their information is anonymous and restricted so agencies don’t receive unlimited access to all data.