



**NATASHA DARTIGUE**  
PUBLIC DEFENDER

**KEITH LOTRIDGE**  
DEPUTY PUBLIC DEFENDER

**ELIZABETH HILLIARD**  
DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

## **POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION**

**BILL: HB 885 – Criminal Law - Causing Ingestion of an Abortion-Inducing Drug - Prohibition  
(Women's Freedom From Coercion Act)**

**FROM: Maryland Office of the Public Defender**

**POSITION: Unfavorable**

**DATE: February 13, 2026**

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The Maryland Office of the Public Defender (MOPD) respectfully requests that the Committee issue an unfavorable report on House Bill 885.

House Bill 885 would prohibit a person from knowingly and willfully causing another to ingest an abortion-inducing drug when the person knows or believes that the other person is pregnant and without consent, through fraud or coercion, or by force or threat of force. It proposes a felony conviction for anyone found guilty and imprisonment up to 25 years.

Current criminal statutes, such as those against assault, battery, or other forms of coercion, already apply to situations of one person forcing another to undergo a medical procedure. The specific targeting of medically induced-abortion is unnecessary. Moreover, there is significant concern of a chilling effect on physicians and providers. Although the bill applies to circumstances only where there has been a use of fraud, coercion, or threat of force it could lead to inconsistent enforcement and wrongful prosecutions, especially against abortion providers who may be accused by disgruntled partners or guardians in the course of providing routine medical care.

**For these reasons, the Maryland Office of the Public Defender urges this Committee to issue an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 885.**

**Submitted by: Maryland Office of the Public Defender, Government Relations Division.**