



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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

Good afternoon, Chairman and members of the Committee. For the record, I am Delegate LaToya Nkongolo, and I am here today to present House Bill 885, the Women's Freedom From Coercion Act.

This legislation is a common-sense necessity. It prohibits any person from knowingly and willfully causing another to ingest an abortion-inducing drug through fraud, coercion, force, or threat of force. While Maryland is a leader in protecting reproductive choice, our current laws contain a dangerous 'Justice Gap' that leaves women uniquely vulnerable to abuse.

Currently, if someone is slipped an abortion-inducing drug to a pregnant person through deceit such as hiding it in food or a drink or in some cases lying about what the medication is, the offender often faces only misdemeanor charges with minimal jail time.

This is a profound insult to a victim's bodily autonomy and the gravity of their loss. HB 885 closes this gap by establishing that causing the non-consensual ingestion of these drugs is a felony punishable by up to 10 years in prison.

I want to address the concerns raised by those who fear this bill is redundant or targets medical providers. It does not. The scope of HB 885 is strictly limited to the criminal acts of third parties who act without consent. It does not prohibit the manufacturing, legal sale, or professional administration of abortion medication, nor does it create new liabilities for pharmaceutical providers acting within the law.

Maryland prides itself on reproductive freedom. That freedom must include the choice to carry a pregnancy to term without fear of chemical coercion. By passing HB 885, we make Maryland a

LA TOYA NKONGOLO
Legislative District 31
Anne Arundel County

Judiciary Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 156
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3510
800-492-7122 Ext. 3510
LaToya.Nkongolo@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

foremost protector of women's health and ensure that the right to choose belongs solely to the individual protected by the full gravity of our laws.

I urge a favorable report on House Bill 885.