



HB0519 – Family Law – Parentage and Adoption

Presented to Hon. Luke Clippinger and Members of the House Judiciary Committee
February 21, 2019 1:00 p.m.

POSITION: SUPPORT

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland **urges the House Judiciary Committee a favorable report on HB0519** – Family Law – Parentage and Adoption, sponsored by Delegate Kathleen Dumais. This legislation helps Marylanders realize their family formation goals.

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland is an advocate for reproductive health, rights, and justice. We strive to ensure every childbearing individual has the freedom to decide if, when, and how to build their families. We honor pregnancy and family formation in all its complexity. In doing so, we support individuals seeking various methods to childbearing, including assisted reproductive methods, as well as advocating for parity for parental rights for same sex couples and establishing parental bonds for those who choose adoption.

Assisted reproduction defined by HB0519 includes gamete and embryo donation, intrauterine or intracervical insemination, in-vitro fertilization, and intracytoplasmic sperm injections. These forms of reproductive technology have been on the rise within the last decade. The Pew Research Center reports that since 1996, the use of assisted reproduction technologies has increased threefold across the United States with the annual number of births from assisted reproduction reaching nearly 80,000 in 2016.¹ Additionally, doctors have continued to perform more in-vitro fertilization treatments over the past decade.² With the increase in use of assisted reproductive technologies to form families, it is essential that the parental rights of those individuals are established.

HB0519 redefines parentage to include children born out of assisted reproductive methods or adoption, and also applies to those who co-parent, but have not participated in legal marriage. As care can come in various forms for children across the state, HB0519 helps to establish a solid foundation for parental rights for those who do not share a biological connection with a child. By expanding the concept of parenthood and caregiving outside of biology and marriage, which have long been the most commonly used means of establishing parental rights, HB0519 seeks to legally recognize a more diverse spectrum of parents and familial arrangements.

Family formation and planning is complex. It is an essential part of reproductive freedom for any Marylander, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, be able to build and support their families in ways that best fit their needs. For these reasons, **NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges a favorable committee report on HB0519**. Thank you for your time and consideration

¹ Livingston, G. (July 17, 2018). "A third of U.S. adults say they have used fertility treatments or know someone who has." The Pew Research Center: Fact Tank. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/07/17/a-third-of-u-s-adults-say-they-have-used-fertility-treatments-or-know-someone-who-has/>

² Doucleff, M. (February 18, 2014). "IVF Baby Boom: Births from fertility procedures hit new high." National Public Radio. <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2014/02/18/279035110/ivf-baby-boom-births-from-fertility-procedure-hit-new-high>