



SB0599 - Immigration Enforcement - County Boards of Education, Public Institutions of Higher Education, and Hospitals - Policies

Presented to Hon. Bobby Zirkin and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
February 27, 2019 12:00 p.m.

POSITION: SUPPORT

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland **urges the Judicial Proceedings Committee a favorable report on SB0599** Immigration Enforcement - County Boards of Education, Public Institutions of Higher Education, and Hospitals - Policies, sponsored by Senator Shirley Nathan-Pulliam.

Our organization is an advocate for reproductive health, rights, and justice. We work to ensure every childbearing individual has the freedom to decide if, when, and how many children to have. The safety of one's community is a factor in this type of decision-making. Reproductive justice cannot be obtained if a child cannot be raised in safety and with dignity, and instances in which parents are unjustly forced apart from their children. Immigration policies are often used to express society's prejudices about which bodies are valued and which ones are not. In the spirit of reproductive justice, we support SB0599.

This legislation seeks to clarify the parameters of state and local participation in federal **civil** immigration enforcement efforts on certain premises through the guidance of the state attorney general. We are particularly supportive of SB0599 calling for state and local governments to create and institute policies at hospitals to ensure accessibility to the public good regardless of immigration status. Without clear assurances, child-bearing individuals may delay or simply not seek urgent pregnancy-related medical services at hospitals for fear of being turned into the authorities. Women will not receive timely prenatal testing, miscarriage management, and hospital deliveries – that could lead to maternal or infant mortality, as well as infertility. Without assurances, undocumented families will fear that giving birth in hospitals means risking mothers and infants being deported, leaving behind other children that would be motherless.

Reproductive justice calls for the right to experience healthy pregnancies and to parent with dignity. The absence of safety affects the health of both men and women and can structure important life decisions around fertility, birth, and parenthood. **Therefore, NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges a favorable report on SB0599.** Thank you for your time and consideration.