



HB0703 - Maryland Commission on Civil Rights - Employment Discrimination – Reporting
Presented to the Hon. Shane Pendergrass and Members of the Health & Government Operations Committee
February 25, 2020, 1:00pm

POSITION: SUPPORT

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland **urges the House Health and Government Operations Committee to issue a favorable report on HB0703 - Maryland Commission on Civil Rights - Employment Discrimination – Reporting**, sponsored by Delegate Lily Qi.

Our organization is an advocate for reproductive health, rights, and justice. We believe that every employee has the right to be treated fairly within the workplace as they seek economic security in forming or caring for one's family. The entity currently charged with upholding employment protections, the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights, collects data on its discrimination cases, but it is not required to analyze it to make policy recommendations. Requiring the Commission to identify recommendations utilizing based on solid data is necessary in order to fully combat employment discrimination. Requiring other County Civil Rights offices to report their respective complaints in a categorized database will better assist these offices in tracking trends regarding employment discrimination. Together, these new reporting and policy recommendation requirements will allow Maryland officials to better combat discrimination in the workforce especially for more vulnerable populations such as women of color and pregnant women. Current national research and the Commission's own report demonstrate that these groups face increased likelihood of facing discrimination in their place of work.

Pregnant workers specifically are often faced with discriminatory stereotypes and actions while in the workforce, and are often refused reasonable accommodations which can have adverse effects on their health and health of their pregnancy.ⁱ Pregnant women of color are often confronted with the stereotype that their bodies are less sensitive to pain which could prevent them from receiving requested adequate accommodations to continue job responsibilities. Between 2011 to 2015, African American women filed 26.6% of the pregnancy discrimination complaints despite making up only 14.3% of the female workforce population.ⁱⁱ Combating employment discrimination in collecting data and making policy recommendations is a critical part to ensuring that all populations including women of color and pregnant women are protected.

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights already compiles discrimination by type, category and region; however, it does not provide any analysis beyond simply presenting the data. For example, in the Commission's 2018 annual report, there were 22 cases filed for discrimination based on pregnancy.ⁱⁱⁱ However, there was no in-depth analysis of these complaints nor was there any recommendation on how these cases could be prevented or combated by policy changes. Requiring counties to compile cases in an organized database will also help local officials identify where policy change may be needed on a county level. Analyzing the data collected and understanding trends is the best way to understand where and how Maryland can combat employment discrimination. For these reasons, NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland **urges a favorable committee report on HB0703**. Thank you for your time and consideration.

ⁱ Nora Ellmann and Jocelyn Frye. "Efforts to Combat Pregnancy Discrimination." Center for American Progress (November 2018)
<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/news/2018/11/02/460353/efforts-combat-pregnancy-discrimination/>

ⁱⁱ Ibid

ⁱⁱⁱ [Maryland Commission on Civil Rights, Annual Report 2018 \(2018\) 15-18](#)