



HB1162 - Health - Abortions - Reporting Requirements

Presented to the Hon. Shane Pendergrass and Members of the Health & Government Operations Committee
March 13, 2020 1:00 p.m.

POSITION: OPPOSE

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland **urges the House Health and Government Operations Committee for an unfavorable report on HB1162 - Health - Abortions - Reporting Requirements**, sponsored by Delegate William Wivell. This legislation is a violation of reproductive freedom and autonomy for patients seeking abortion care, while placing certain health care providers at risk of criminal or civil penalties.

Our organization is an advocate for reproductive health, rights and justice. We strive to ensure every individual has the freedom to decide if, when, and how to plan for their future and their families. In doing so, we acknowledge that every pregnancy is unique and honor pregnancy decision-making in all its complexity. As a result, we recognize that abortion care access is both an essential part of the ability to make reproductive decisions and a constitutional right as affirmed by federal caselaw since the *Roe v. Wade* ruling in 1973. In order to ensure all individuals have access to abortion care, it is vital that the state oppose bills like HB1162 legislation aimed to stigmatize patients and burden their medical providers.

While some reporting requirements may be beneficial for public health, publicly available data about people who obtain abortion care must have safeguards to protect the right to privacy and needs for the patients that seek this care, as well as abortion providers. HB1162 requires that extensive demographic data – state and county of residence, age, race, and marital status of the patient, estimated gestational age of the fetus, month in which abortion care is provided, and method of abortion care – be collected by physicians, hospitals, or facilities providing this medical care. **Because of widespread stigma surrounding abortion, patients seeking abortion care that are asked this information may not seek such services for fear of being identified by community members or being judged and shamed for why they sought an abortion.** We are aware of anti-choice tactics in other states that use extensive demographic information about patients in conjunction with visual information taken outside of clinics, such as photographs of license plates and videotape of patients entering and exiting the premises, to identify and harass patients and members of their households.

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland opposes harmful abortion-coverage restrictions, which segregate abortion care from other necessary healthcare services, run counter to the purpose of offering comprehensive reproductive healthcare across the lifespan, and put women's health and privacy in jeopardy. Marylanders should not turn away from basic reproductive-health services or have their reproductive autonomy and personal safety jeopardized due to reporting requirements. **For these reasons, NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges an unfavorable committee report on HB1162.**