



Celebrating 50 Years of Advancing Justice

Dear Jessica,

As Annapolis is awash in the color green today – I can't help but wonder, what bills have seen a **GREEN** vote this week?

I am happy to report a number of our priority bills have seen significant movement!

Both the House and Senate versions of Declaration of Rights - Right to Reproductive Freedom (HB 705/SB798) have passed their initiating chambers in identical form, which means we are all but assured to see a ballot measure adding reproductive freedom to our state constitution in 2024. I am so grateful not only to the legislative leaders who made this happen, but to all of you who emailed and called to hold elected officials accountable on this issue!

Significantly, in the past 48 hours we saw a great deal of movement on [SB129 - Criminal Law - Sexual Crimes - Repeal of Spousal Defense](#), where it not only passed out of Committee but also passed second reader on the Senate floor. As the bill has already passed the House, today's third reader is the last step in finally ensuring that married people have the same rights and protections against rape as unmarried couples have.

Another bill we have been waiting to see pass out of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee finally had its moment yesterday when [SB 36 – Family Law – Grounds for Divorce](#) received a favorable report. This bill has also passed through the House, and is now that much closer to becoming law.

As for the Reproductive Rights Package of 2023, the Reproductive Health Protection Act (aka the Shielding Bill) has passed out of Committee in the Senate, but is awaiting a vote in the House, and the bill to ensure public universities have reproductive health plans in place ([HB477/SB341](#)) is in the same posture. Meanwhile, the Patient Privacy bill ([HB812/SB786](#)) has been voted out favorably from both the House and Senate committees and now will go to second reader in each chamber.

So what is left? Plenty!

And legislators will be working around the clock for the next few days trying to move as many bills out of Committee, through the floor, and across the street! Here are some bills that really need your attention. Scroll down below my signature for easy links to get your message where it needs to go.

SB292 - [Criminal Law - Victims of Child Sex Trafficking and Human Trafficking - Safe Harbor and Service Response](#)

This desperately needed legislation would protect children who have been trafficked from being charged with prosecution and other crimes related to the trafficking. It has also passed the House and is awaiting a vote in the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee.

HB283/SB 460 - [Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Gender-Affirming Treatment \(Trans Health Equity Act\)](#)

For over fifty years the Women's Law Center has been a leading voice in the fight for women's rights and gender equity. And when we say women, that always includes transgender women, because transgender women are women. As women, we all deserve the same access to physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy. This legislation seeks to address one of the greatest disparities faced by the Trans community by requiring Medicaid to cover medically necessary gender-affirming care. The House version is up for THIRD READER TODAY and the Senate version was up for a vote last night but was laid over until TODAY! There have been attempts to add harmful amendments to this bill but it needs to be passed out CLEAN with NO AMENDMENTS.

HB549/SB555 [Fair Wage Act of 2023](#)

Working families cannot wait several more years for their salaries to catch up to the cost of living. This bill will accelerate the timeline of increasing the minimum wage so that all affected workers will be making \$15 by the end of this year. This will partially make up for the rising cost of living we have seen since the pandemic. It is on THIRD

READER in the Senate TODAY and is awaiting a vote in the House Economic Matters Committee.

HB 988/SB828 - [Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program – Modifications](#)

The passage of the Time to Care Act in 2022 was a historic victory for Maryland workers and their families - **but it was just the first step in realizing Paid Family and Medical Leave in Maryland.** The critical work to create and implement an accessible, equitable, and robust FAML program is the next major step in fulfilling the promise of the Time to Care Act of 2022, and this legislation will create the parameters necessary to put the program firmly on the path toward successful implementation. The Senate bill is on THIRD READER TODAY and the House bill has yet to be voted out of Committee.

HB 832 - [Labor and Employment - Equal Pay for Equal Work - Wage Range Transparency](#)

Equal Pay Day was this week and by passing this bill the legislature would help close the gender pay gap by requiring that all job listings include the salary range available for the position. It is awaiting a Committee vote.

Onward together,



TAKE ACTION TODAY!

Contact [YOUR Delegate](#) and ask them to VOTE FAVORABLY on:

- HB283 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Gender–Affirming Treatment (Trans Health Equity Act)
- HB812 - Health - Reproductive Health Services - Protected Information and Insurance Requirements

Contact [YOUR Senator](#) and ask them to VOTE FAVORABLY on:

- SB129 - Criminal Law - Sexual Crimes - Repeal of Spousal Defense
- SB36 - Family Law - Grounds for Divorce
- SB828 - Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program – Modifications
- SB555 – Fair Wage Act of 2023
- SB786 - Health - Reproductive Health Services - Protected Information and Insurance Requirements

[Contact members of Finance](#) and ask them to VOTE FAVORABLY WITHOUT AMENDMENTS on:

- SB460 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Gender–Affirming Treatment (Trans Health Equity Act)

[Contact members of Judicial Proceedings](#) and ask them to VOTE FAVORABLY on:

- SB292 Criminal Law - Victims of Child Sex Trafficking and Human Trafficking - Safe Harbor and Service Response

[Contact members of Judiciary](#) and ask them to VOTE FAVORABLY on:

- HB808 - Reproductive Health Protection Act

[Contact members of Economic Matters](#) and ask them to VOTE FAVORABLY on:

- HB988 - Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program – Modifications
- HB832 - Labor and Employment - Equal Pay for Equal Work - Wage Range Transparency
- HB549 – Fair Wage Act of 2023

P.S. As always, if you appreciate the work we do, whether in the General Assembly or through our [direct legal services](#) across the State, [give here!](#) And if this email was forwarded to you by a friend, make sure to sign up for our legislative alerts [here!](#)

P.P.S. **Save the Date for the WLC's [Annual Celebration and Awards Ceremony on May 3rd at 6pm at Citron!](#)** Join us in presenting the Rosalyn B. Bell Award to Marla Zide, Esq.; the Dorothy Beatty Memorial Award to Robyn Elliott; and the Access to Justice Award to Natasha M. Dartigue, Esq. and Debbie Feinstein, Esq. For more information or to buy tickets, click [HERE](#).

Have an event you'd like to share with us? Send us an [email!](#)

About The Women's Law Center of Maryland: The vision of the Women's Law Center of Maryland is a legal system that provides justice and fairness for women. The Women's Law Center's mission is to ensure the physical safety, economic security, and autonomy of women throughout the State. We work towards this goal by providing direct legal representation, information and referral services, and legislative advocacy.

Our efforts to promote justice, fairness, and equality for women are only possible because of friends like you.

Give Today

The Women's Law Center of Maryland, Inc. is a charitable organization designated as tax-exempt under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3). A copy of our financial statement is available upon request. Documents and information submitted under the State of Maryland Charitable Solicitations Act are available from the Office of the Secretary of State of Maryland, Annapolis, MD 21401 for the cost of copying and postage.



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