



Celebrating 50 Years of Advancing Justice

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Friend of the WLC

Just down the street, in our nation's capital, a supermajority of conservative justices are poised to overturn the foundational case for abortion rights in America, *Roe v. Wade*. The WLC proudly signed on to an amicus brief in support of our continued right to abortion in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, a case that looks at Mississippi's attempt to ban any abortion after 15-weeks. The Supreme Court is expected to issue its decision this spring, and it's not a question of *if* abortion rights will be restricted, *but how badly*. Even if the *Dobbs* case doesn't definitively answer the question, there are roughly a dozen other cases in a pipeline waiting for a chance to chip away at our rights – or completely overturn *Roe v. Wade*. With 26 states having trigger laws – which will ban or severely restrict abortion if *Roe* is overturned – more than half the nation could soon be without meaningful access to abortion care.

But it doesn't have to be that way for Maryland.

As reproductive rights are being stripped away in nationwide, and a neighboring sister-state has appointed an ["ambassador to the unborn,"](#) we are uniquely situated to not only ensure a right to reproductive freedom but also to create meaningful access to abortion care throughout our state. This week the legislature will hear a host of bills aimed at doing just that – enshrining our right to reproductive freedom within our State's constitution, expanding who can provide abortions and who is covered by insurance for abortions, and finally protecting those who self-manage or assist others in seeking abortion care. There hasn't been a more critical time for abortion rights activists in almost half a century. But together we can make sure that Maryland is leading the way.

Tuesday, February 22nd

[House Bill 1171 – Declaration of Rights – Right to Reproductive Liberty](#)

While we watch the continued attacks on abortion rights across the country, they are thankfully strong here in Maryland. Maryland voters overwhelmingly approved a ballot measure in 1992 that led to a statutory right to an abortion. The Maryland legislature has vigilantly and successfully defended against an onslaught of attempts to chip away at those rights over the past several decades. But we cannot take for granted that those rights could not at some point be stripped, not when so much is at stake. And while our statutory protections extend to abortion care, they do not extend to other forms of reproductive health care. That is why [Speaker of the House Adrienne Jones](#), has put forth a bill that would allow Marylanders to vote for a constitutional amendment in the upcoming general election. A constitutional amendment would be the strongest protection we could provide to ensure future generations of Marylanders have meaningful access to the full range of reproduction health care, from birth control to infertility treatments, to abortion.

[House Bill 937 – Abortion Care Access Act](#)

[House Bill 952 – Access to Abortion Care and Health Insurance Act](#)

Introduced in the Senate as one bill, these two House bills are part of the House leadership's reproductive rights package and will ensure that our right to reproductive freedom is more than just theoretical by removing barriers to abortion care. With two-thirds of Maryland counties not having a single abortion provider, this legislation will update our laws to reflect the recommendations of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists, by allowing nurse practitioners, nurse-midwives, licensed midwives, and physician assistants to also provide abortion care, as they already do in over a dozen other states. This is particularly critical right now as providers are seeing an increased demand for abortions as access is restricted in neighboring regions. Additionally, it increases access to abortion care for women utilizing both private insurance and Medicaid, by removing obstacles such as deductible

requirements, co-payments, or cost-sharing provisions. Reproductive health care should not be dependent on your zip code or your source of insurance coverage. In order to have meaningful access in Maryland, we need to be able to meet the needs of those seeking abortion care.

Wednesday, February 23rd

[Senate Bill 890 – Abortion Care Access Act](#)

This is the cross-file of the two bills being heard in the House that will increase access to abortion by expanding the scope of practitioners who may perform abortions and by expanding the insurance coverage of those seeking abortion care.

[Senate Bill 669 – Pregnant Person’s Freedom Act of 2022](#)

As we have seen in states like Texas, it is not only abortion providers who are under attack, but also those who seek out abortion care or assist those in their efforts. SB 669 would prevent the prosecution of pregnant people or those who have experienced pregnancy loss or termination, as well as those individuals providing support to someone seeking abortion care. Given the shortage of abortion providers in the country and the burdensome restrictions that prevent women from accessing abortion care, those seeking abortions are turning more frequently to self-managed abortion care – in other words, they are turning to medication outside of a clinical setting. And they are at risk of prosecution. So too are women who miscarry either due to accidents or substance addiction. This legislation would prevent that inhumane practice.

There are, of course, other bills of import being heard this week – including one to [accelerate the increases to our minimum wage](#) and another to ensure paycheck stability for those restaurant and retail workers who work [irregular and inflexible schedules](#). We will be supporting those bills – and more – to ensure the physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy of women in Maryland.

Onward,

The WLC Advocacy Team

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. Make sure you mark down these upcoming events of interest from our sister-partners and allies:

- Tonight’s the night! The time to pass the [Time to Care Act](#) and provide paid family leave to Marylanders is NOW. Join advocates and the [Time to Care coalition](#) for a rally to support paid family leave at Lawyer’s Mall TONIGHT, Monday, February 21st at 6:30pm. Register for the Rally and find out more information [HERE](#).
- This year’s Gender Justice Rally has been postponed. We will let you know when organizers have a new date – hopefully in March (that’s Women’s History Month after all!)
- Finally, join our friends at the [Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence](#) as they honor and remember the lives lost in the past year to intimate partner violence at their virtual [Memorial Service](#), February 22nd at 4pm.

GIVE TODAY

[Sponsorships and tickets now available for our 50th Anniversary Celebration & Awards Ceremony!](#)

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.

