



Celebrating 50 Years of Advancing Justice

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Last week the House Health & Government Operations (HGO) Committee heard testimony from reproductive advocates and anti-choice activists alike on a package of bills aimed at ensuring reproductive freedom and removing barriers to abortion care. The Bills were originally slated to be voted on in Committee last Friday but were held over, given anti-choice activists time to rally their support. The Bills will now be voted on TOMORROW with a floor fight expected by the middle of next week.

NOW IS THE TIME TO TELL THE COMMITTEE: WE MUST ENSURE REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MARYLANDERS!

Committee members need to hear from as many folks as possible that support these bills. Contact information for Committee members are below. And assuming the Committee votes the bills out favorably, we will need to reach out to ALL our delegates to ensure these get voted out of the House WITHOUT AMENDMENTS. Not sure who your delegates are? Find out [HERE](#). Learn more about the bills below.

[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, but sponsored as two bills in the House by [Delegate Ariana Kelly](#), these 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.

So what can you do? TAKE ACTION!

Call or email the members of the Health and Government Operations Committee (listed in the table below) THIS MORNING before the 1pm

voting session and ask them to VOTE FAVORABLY on HB 1171, HB 932, and HB 952!

And don't forget to THANK sponsors [Speaker Jones](#) and [Delegate Kelly](#)!

Short on time? Just copy and paste this into your "to" line to send the Committee one email:

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Kathy.szelig@house.state.md.us; Karen.young@house.state.md.us;

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!](#)

Shane Pendergrass (chair)	Shane.pendergrass@house.state.md.us	410-841-3139
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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.

