



Women's Law Center of Maryland

Celebrating 50 Years of Advancing Justice

Dear Jessica,

Next Monday, March 20th, is cross-over day, the final day by which any piece of legislation wishing to become law must be not only passed out of committee, but also passed out of the legislative chamber so that it can “cross-over” to the other side of the street and be heard by the opposite chamber. More than 2000 bill hearings will have been conducted, but not every bill gets a vote. Now is the last chance to put pressure on committee chairs to vote on bills that have a disproportionate impact on the physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy of women in Maryland!

Under my signature you'll find the list of bills in need of action. As always, I've included who to contact (with a direct link to their email!) and what to ask for.

But before we can get to the voting, there are still more bills waiting for their chance to be heard.

This week we will be supporting bills to [increase the criminal penalty for law enforcement officers who engage in sexual conduct with people in custody; prevent survivors who speak out against powerful perpetrators from being targeted by SLAPP suits \(Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation\);](#) and an important bill to [ensure the physical safety, dignity, and humanity of incarcerated transgender people.](#)

We will also see a slate of anti-abortion bills aimed at eliminating a pregnant person's right to bodily autonomy. This includes a bill to [prohibit abortions once a fetal heartbeat is detected,](#) another that [forces medically unnecessary ultrasounds and waiting periods,](#) and yet another to [provide a state funding to Crisis Pregnancy Centers - organizations that seek to intercept vulnerable women with unintended pregnancies who might be considering abortion and convince them otherwise using fear-mongering and dubious medical research.](#) Given all the hard work this session to enshrine the right to reproductive freedom in our constitution, we must ensure that these bills are emphatically rejected by the legislature.

**The FOLLOWING BILLS NEED YOUR ATTENTION TODAY!
See Our Take-Action Checklist Below!**

[SB798 – Declaration of Rights – Right to Reproductive Freedom](#)

Senator Dawn Gile deftly defended this bill against six vicious amendments, guiding it to pass Second reader in the Senate on Friday. The last step in the process is a final full vote on the bill expected to be taken on the Senate floor TOMORROW!

[HB808](#) and [SB859 Reproductive Health Protection Act](#)

These bills will protect patients, providers, and those who assist them in obtaining

abortion care from criminal and civil liability against overreaching zealous out-of-state actors. They are critically important pieces of legislation and need to be voted out of Committee this week in order to stand a chance.

[HB812](#) and **[SB786 Health – Reproductive Health Services – Protected Information and Insurance Requirements](#)**

This legislation will prevent sensitive health information related to reproductive health care from being shared across state lines, where anti-abortion prosecutors could use the information to go after patients and providers.

[SB129 Criminal Law – Sexual Crimes – Repeal of Spousal Defense](#)

The cross-file of this bill has already passed the House, but much like the past several years when this bill has failed, it is once again awaiting a vote from the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee. This bill will finally allow justice for survivors of sexual assault who are unable to see their rapists prosecuted because they are married to them.

[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.

[SB36 Family Law - Grounds for Divorce](#)

This is yet one more bill that has passed the House but needs a committee vote in the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee. It will simply and modernize our divorce laws, removing barriers that force people to remain in unhealthy marriages.

With less than a month left until the end of session, I am so incredibly grateful for all of you who have called, emailed, and otherwise shown up to ensure our legislature knows that these issues are important. Thank you for sticking with us – now let us work together to get over the finish line!

Onward together,



TAKE ACTION TODAY!

Contact **[Senate President Bill Ferguson](#)** and **[Senator Gile](#)** and THANK THEM for their leadership.

[Contact YOUR Senator](#) and ask them to vote in favor of SB798 in enshrine reproductive freedom in our Constitution!

Ask members of **[Senate Finance](#)** to vote FAVORABLY on:

- SB786 - Health - Reproductive Health Services - Protected Information and Insurance Requirements.

Ask members of the **[House Health & Government Operations Committee](#)** to vote FAVORABLY on:

- HB812 - Health - Reproductive Health Services - Protected Information and Insurance Requirements

Tell the members of [Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee](#) that you support:

- SB859 – Reproductive Health Protection Act
- SB36 – Family Law – Grounds for Divorce
- SB129 - Criminal Law - Sexual Crimes - Repeal of Spousal Defense
- SB292 - Victims of Child Sex Trafficking - Safe Harbor

Let the members of the [House Judiciary Committee](#) know you want them to pass:

- HB705 – Reproductive Health Protection Act

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](#).

P.P.P.S. Save the date for these upcoming events from our partners and friends!

- Join Leadership Baltimore County for a [Rebalance, Rediscover, Reinvent](#) event on how leaders support women at home, and work, and in the community on Thursday, March 16th 8:30-10:30am in Owings Mills.





REBALANCE REDISCOVER REINVENT

How leaders support women at home, at work and in the community

**THURSDAY, MARCH 16
8:30 - 10:30 AM**

BECO Towers, 10461 Mill Run Circle, Owings Mills

Speakers



Janet Currie
President
Bank of America
Greater Maryland



Heather Iliff
President & CEO
Maryland Nonprofits



Natasha Wainwright
Owner
Natasha's Just Brittle

Moderator



Sloane Brown
Podcast/Interview
Host

\$30 LBC MEMBERS, \$35 NON-MEMBERS
[Register at leadbaltimore.org](http://leadbaltimore.org)

EVENT PARTNERS






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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