



Women's Law Center of Maryland

Celebrating 50 Years of Advancing Justice

Dear Jessica,

This week will hear four of the five major pieces of legislation aimed at preserving our rights to reproductive freedom and protecting patients and providers from the long-arm of anti-abortion states. There is a lot of information packed in here, but stick with it, **because there is a lot on the line!**

With the *Dobbs* decision, the U.S. Supreme Court took the unprecedented step of eliminating one of most fundamental rights – the right of an individual to make their own decision about abortion. And this is just the first right that has been eliminated. We know that there is an organized campaign to take away other fundamental rights to bodily autonomy – whether it is our decision about who we love or whether we use birth control.

Our reproductive rights are under threat -- not just from the U.S. Supreme Court, but from other states like Texas and Missouri. These states are enacting laws that target reproductive health care providers with threats of criminal prosecution, civil litigation, and licensure penalties. Their goal is not merely to make providers too afraid to serve out-of-state patients. Their goal is to make providers too afraid to provide reproductive health services all together.

In Maryland, we will not be intimidated. We will not be deterred. We will protect the reproductive liberties of every single person in our state. The **2023 Reproductive Health Package** is our best chance to stand against the people who are trying to take away our rights through intimidation. We will not let anyone – whether it is an individual driven by their own ideology, or an aggressive state government – dictate our ability as Marylanders to make our own decisions about our bodies, and our lives.

[SB 798 - Declaration of Rights- Right to Reproductive Freedom](#)

Sponsor: President Ferguson (Finance Committee) (March 1, 2023)

The Constitutional Amendment provides the highest possible level of protection of reproductive freedom in Maryland. The bill provides for the rights of individuals to make and effectuate their own decisions about abortion, birth control and continuing a pregnancy. This legislation is singularly the most important action we can take to protect the reproductive freedom of the generations behind us.

[SB 786- Reproductive Health Services – Protected Information and Insurance Requirements](#)

Sponsor: Senator Hettleman (Finance Committee) (March 1, 2023)

[HB 812 - Reproductive Health Services - Protected Information and Insurance Requirements](#)

Sponsor: Delegate Rosenberg (Health & Government Operations Committee) (March 2, 2023)

The campaign to intimidate providers and patients in Maryland depends on having access to information about reproductive health care provided in our state. Under electronic health record systems, protected health information – including reproductive health records - flows easily between states. Information sharing is allowed by law if it is related to coordination of care among a patient's providers. Under most circumstances, care coordination improves the health outcomes of patients. But in the case of reproductive health, information sharing is putting reproductive health providers and patients at great risk.

This legislation provides extra layers of protection for reproductive health information in electronic health record systems, often called health information exchanges. The legislation also ensures Maryland's state government protects personal information of patient and providers that may be stored in state databases. Reproductive freedom in Maryland depends on making sure we do not expose the personal information of our providers and patients.

[SB 859 - Reproductive Health Protection Act](#)

Sponsor: Senator Smith (Judicial Proceedings Committee) (March 1, 2023)

This legislation states unequivocally that Maryland will not support out-of-state investigations about legal reproductive health care in our state. We will not support other states that seek to intimidate our providers and threaten their state residents who travel to Maryland to seek reproductive health care. Our courts will not process subpoenas, our state agencies will not provide records, and law enforcement will not cooperate with states investigating legal reproductive health care in our state. With this bill, we will protect health care providers, patients, and the people who support patients in their reproductive health decisions from criminal charges, civil litigation, and administrative penalties. We will only have reproductive freedom in Maryland if we shield ourselves from the threats and intimidation tactics of other states.

[HB 995 - Commercial Law – Health Data Privacy](#)

Sponsor: Delegate Love (Economic Matters Committee) (March 1, 2023)

Reproductive freedom depends on the ability to keep personal information private. But it is nearly impossible not to leave an electronic trail when seeking reproductive health information and services. People can be identified through:

- their searches for a reproductive health care provider on the internet;
- the use of their phones for driving directions to a reproductive health provider; or
- geo-tracking applications collecting data on an individual's precise location.

In the post *Dobbs* environment, online information is being sought by states and anti-abortion organizations seeking to intimidate people seeking reproductive health services. Individuals have little recourse, as online data is owned by private companies rather than consumers themselves. The disclosure of online data will put reproductive health patients at risk for civil litigation or even criminal charges. This legislation protects people seeking

reproductive health care by giving them control of their online data. Consumers would be able to control if, when, and to whom online data is disclosed.

Rounding out this week are other important bills that we are supporting including:

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

Sponsor: Senator M. Washington (Finance Committee) (February 28, 2023)

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. SB460 seeks to address one of the greatest disparities faced by the Trans community by requiring Medicaid to cover medically necessary gender-affirming care.

[SB 540 - Human Relations - Civil Rights Enforcement - Powers of the Attorney General](#)

Sponsor: President Ferguson (Judicial Proceedings Committee) (February 28, 2023)

[HB 772 - Human Relations - Civil Rights Enforcement - Powers of the Attorney General](#)

Sponsor: Speaker Jones (Judiciary Committee) (March 1, 2023)

This legislation provides the Attorney General with the authority to investigate conduct that violates any federal or State civil rights, along with subpoena authority to obtain information in the course of the investigation, in particular in cases of discrimination, without having to rely on the initiation of an individual complaint. This enforcement can reach systemic discrimination that lies at the heart of the WLC’s mission, including sexual harassment within the workplace and the persistence of the gender pay gap. Given the pervasiveness of both these issues, as well as the systemic barriers often preventing victim redress, providing the Attorney General authority to pursue such claims independently would benefit individuals and our communities.

These bills are all important and they all need support from folks like you. Stay tuned as we provide updates later this week with who to contact and when to make sure legislators know what matters most to you.

Onward together,



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!

- Hosted by the Women Legislators of Maryland, Executive Alliance, Planned Parenthood of Maryland, and Pro Choice Maryland, the **2023 Gender Justice Rally** will be held March 6th at 6pm at Lawyer's Mall in Annapolis. Register to attend [HERE](#)!



- 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



Sloane Brown
Podcast/Interview
Host

Moderator

\$30 LBC MEMBERS, \$35 NON-MEMBERS
Register at leadbaltimore.org

EVENT PARTNERS



Women's Law Center
of Maryland

Have an event you'd like to share with us? Send us an [email!](mailto:info@leadbaltimore.org)

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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