



TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

SB 975-Public Safety—Reproductive Health Care Clinic Security Grant Program— Establishment (Supporting Reproductive Health Care Clinic Act)

POSITION: Support

BY: Linda T. Kohn, President

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The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization that works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. The League believes that everyone should have access to reproductive health care in a safe setting.

After the Supreme Court overruled *Roe v. Wade*, many states passed statutes banning or impermissibly restricting a person's ability to obtain reproductive care. In response, in 2023, the Maryland General Assembly passed the Reproductive Health Protection Act (HB 808/ SB 859) which protects patients, health care providers and those assisting patients from such litigation.

Specifically, the Reproductive Health Protection Act shields individuals from extradition, prohibits Maryland agencies and law enforcement from assisting out of state investigations of people who access, provide, or assist people to obtain reproductive care that is legal in Maryland, and prohibits licensing boards from investigating Maryland licensees and certificate holders solely because they provide legally-permitted reproductive care.

Under the Reproductive Health Protection Act, health care professionals are able to provide reproductive care and patients can access such care without fear of a civil action or criminal proceeding. Unfortunately, access to reproductive care alone is not sufficient. After the Supreme Court overruled *Roe v. Wade*, violence against reproductive health care clinics, patients who seek such care, and health care providers increased sharply. See March 11, 2023 National Abortion Federation Press Release. In order to minimize the threat of violence, reproductive health care clinics must purchase adequate security.

Senate Bill 975 creates the, "Reproductive Health Care Clinic Security Grant Program.," and places it in the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services. Under this program qualifying reproductive health care clinics would receive grants for security measures. Patients should be able to access care and professionals should be able to provide such care without concern for their safety. Senate Bill 975 would help reproductive health care clinics pay for these needed security measures.

For these reasons the League of Women Voters Maryland, which represents more than 1,500 concerned citizens throughout Maryland, strongly urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 975.