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TO: The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair  
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee  
The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones

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DATE: February 21, 2023

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 705 – *Declaration of Rights – Right to Reproductive Freedom*

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On behalf of the Maryland State Medical Society, the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Maryland Section of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, we submit this letter of **support** for House Bill 705.

House Bill 705 seeks to establish permanent protection of reproductive rights in Maryland. While it is likely that a majority of General Assembly members will remain supportive of reproductive rights for the next few generations, the past few years have clearly shown that there can be political shifts that could put the protection of reproductive rights at risk as we are seeing in other States. House Bill 705, if enacted, would place on the ballot of the next general election a constitutional amendment that, if passed, would establish that every person, as a central component of the individual’s rights to liberty and equality, has the fundamental right to reproductive liberty and would prohibit the State from directly or indirectly denying, burdening, or abridging that right, unless justified by a compelling State interest. Amending the State’s Constitution will ensure access to abortion along with other reproductive rights in perpetuity.

The above-named organizations support safe, legal, and accessible reproductive services, free from harmful restrictions. The State’s adoption of the proposed constitutional amendment will permanently secure the right to reproductive liberty, including the right to abortion care. A favorable report is requested.