



Ella Ennis, Legislative Chairman
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The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
And Members of the Finance Committee
Senate of Maryland
Annapolis, Maryland

Re: **SB 862** - Public Health – Pregnancy – Coercion (Protecting Pregnant Women Against Coercive Abuse and Human Trafficking) - **FAVORABLE**.

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee Members,

SB 862 establishes clear definitions of the types of behavior that constitute coercive threats or actions towards pregnant women and girls, particularly those being trafficked, or in danger of being trafficked for sex or labor. It provides protections for women and girls against being coerced or threatened into having an abortion, and provides an avenue for suing the coercer. It forbids the firing of a pregnant woman or rescinding a scholarship from her because of the pregnancy.

In addition, it requires that health care facilities and abortion facilities post signs advising women and girls of their right not to be forced into having an abortion. It also provides for a minor left homeless due to a parent or guardian's actions upon learning of the pregnancy to be considered emancipated and qualified to receive public assistance to aid her during the pregnancy.

It is truly sad that this legislation is needed but it is; and we urge the Committee to vote a **FAVORABLE** report for **SB 862**.

Sincerely,
Ella Ennis
Legislative Chairman
Maryland Federation of Republican Women