



Testimony for the House Health and Government Operations Committee

HB 23 – Freestanding Ambulatory Care Facilities – Licensing – Abortion Services

March 15, 2011

OPPOSE

The ACLU of Maryland strongly opposes HB 23, which inappropriately alters the definition of “ambulatory surgical facility” to include entities that provide abortion through the use of surgical services. This bill improperly singles out abortion providers, is fundamentally meant to block access to abortion services, and would have serious unintended negative consequences for doctors in Maryland. We urge an unfavorable report.

This bill wrongfully targets physicians that provide abortions. While there are various types of medical care that may be regulated under ambulatory surgery center laws, this bill specifically singles out abortion care. Targeting abortion providers does not make sense, and is completely counterproductive for women’s health and safety.

Maryland women have a right to safe, healthy, and accessible abortion care. The purpose of this bill is to limit access to this well-established right. There have been national efforts by anti-choice groups to mandate that abortion providers work in ambulatory surgical facilities. Anti-choice groups have pushed this effort specifically so that women have less access to abortion care.

Additionally, this bill would have unintended consequences for doctors who perform procedures other than abortions. These consequences will be serious, profound, and will limit access to other important medical services in Maryland.

This bill is a dangerous attempt to close providers of abortion services in the state of Maryland, and as a result, women would be largely without access to crucial reproductive health services. We strongly urge an unfavorable report on this dangerous piece of legislation.