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Title: Request for City Action - Fund to Support Reproductive Health Care
For the purpose of inviting the Mayor to work with the City Council to create a public fund that supports community-based organizations in Baltimore that are engaged in reproductive health services.

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* Warning: This is an unofficial, introductory copy of the bill.
The official copy considered by the City Council is the first reader copy.

Introductory*

**City of Baltimore
Council Bill R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Cohen, Porter

A Resolution Entitled

A Council Resolution concerning
Request for City Action - Fund to Support Reproductive Health Care

For the purpose of inviting the Mayor to work with the City Council to create a public fund that supports community-based organizations in Baltimore that are engaged in reproductive health services.

As the Supreme Court of the United States moves to strike down Roe v. Wade, 410 U.S. 113 (1973), the City of Baltimore must remain an exemplar for reproductive health care services. Our nation is in crisis. If the federal government will not step up to protect the reproductive health of our most vulnerable citizens, Baltimore will. To that end, Baltimore City Government has an obligation to actively and ardently support community organizations providing these essential services. The impending decision to dismantle Roe v. Wade will strip away dignity and choice from people who most need government on their side. We will not allow needless suffering in our City.

Restricting access to safe abortions and reproductive health care poses risks to physical and mental well-being. Such restrictions force patients to delay care, shutter clinics providing life-saving services, and prohibit access altogether in neighboring states, such as West Virginia. This resolution is intended to protect all people with the capacity for pregnancy-cisgender women, transgender men, non-binary individuals, those who identify with a different gender, and others-who are unjustly harmed by restrictions on access to reproductive health care.

The people who will be most harmed by this policy decision are living in poverty in states that limit reproductive healthcare. These Americans face significant barriers to accessing basic healthcare and transportation. Many have faced various forms of violence and in some states, rape and incest will not be just cause to get an abortion. This decision by the Supreme Court is another way of punishing the most vulnerable. In particular, Black women are disproportionately impacted by a lack of quality reproductive health care. This group of women are also 3.5 times more likely to die from pregnancy or childbirth complications when compared to White women.

While comprehensive reproductive health care in Maryland is not presently threatened by the decision to overturn Roe vs. Wade, full protection of these services in our State must still be urgently prioritized. More than two-thirds of Maryland counties - home to a third of women living in Maryland - do not have clinics that provide abortions. Further, Maryland branches of Planned Parenthood have already reported an increase in patients traveling from Texas and anticipate an additional influx of patients from other conservative states that intend to restrict access to reproductive health care services. Access to comprehensive reproductive health care and the budget of the Baltimore City Health Department must be expanded to compensate for the inevitable influx of patients seeking health services here in Baltimore.

The City of Baltimore has always been committed to the health, safety, and well-being of its residents. Therefore, the City Council asks that additional measures are put in place to ensure continued access to reproductive health care for all those who seek refuge in Baltimore. We invite and urge the Mayor to work with the City Council to create a fund to support local organizations that provide reproductive health care through the provision of microgrants to aid in increasing capacity. Such organizations include Bloom Collective, Mommy Up, House of Ruth, and Health Quality Innovators. Additionally, the City Council calls on Governor Larry Hogan to immediately release the \$3.5 million of restricted funds in the State's fiscal year 2023 operating budget to train healthcare providers and health navigators. Finally, we, the Administration should support the expansion of existing infrastructure and budgets of the Baltimore City Health Department and City Health Centers to specifically provide reproductive health care.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of Baltimore, That the City Council calls the Mayor to work with the City Council to create a public fund that supports community-based organizations in Baltimore that are engaged in reproductive health care services.

And be it further resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Governor, the Honorable Chairs and members of the Baltimore City House and Senate Delegations to the Maryland General Assembly, the President of the Maryland Senate, the Speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates, the Commissioner of the Department of Health, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.