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Maryland Right to Life Decries De-Medicalization of Abortion

On Saturday, April 9th, the Maryland General Assembly voted to override Governor Hogan's veto of House Bill 937 "**Abortion Care Access Act**". Despite strong opposition from Republican lawmakers, House and Senate Democrats passed the bill putting abortion profits before patients. It commits \$3.5 million in public funds each year to train non-physicians to perform abortions and diverts public funds from lifesaving alternatives to abortion including access to quality reproductive health services under the care of a licensed physician.

One of the few health and safety protections for pregnant women in Maryland law was the requirement that **only a licensed physician may perform abortions**. With passage of this bill, the abortion industry has been authorized to allow practically anyone to "perform" surgical abortions and "provide" dangerous chemical abortion pills.

Stated MDRTL Director of Legislation, Laura Bogley, "*Enactment of this reckless bill will make Maryland the abortion Capital of the nation. Women and girls will be trafficked here across state lines for unregulated abortion, subjecting them to greater risk of substandard care, injury and death.*" Bogley continued, "*The abortion industry is only concerned with abortion remaining legal and lucrative. The state of Maryland has failed in its duty to ensure that abortion is both safe and rare.*"

The lack of physicians willing to commit abortions is not a matter of medical scarcity, but of medical *ethics*. 9 out of 10 ob/gyns refuse to commit abortions because they recognize the scientific fact that a human fetus is a living human being and they have sworn a Hippocratic Oath to first do no harm to patients. The abortion industry's strategy is two-fold: (1) circumvent physician requirements in the law by authorizing lower-skilled health workers to perform or provide abortion; and (2) authorize a wide variety of abortion providers to remotely prescribe and distribute dangerous chemical abortion pills, including across state lines and through interstate licensing agreements.

The practice of abortion in America has become the "**red light district**" of medicine, populated by dangerous, substandard providers. With the proliferation of "Do-It-Yourself" abortion by pills, the abortion industry itself has subjected women to "back alley" style abortions, where they bleed alone without medical supervision or assistance. Since the Food and Drug Administration approved the experimental use of abortion pills, emergency room visits due to related complications and injuries have increased 500%.

MDRTL lead a robust grassroots campaign as well as expert witness testimony panels in opposition to the Abortion Care Access Act as it moved through the House and Senate. MDRTL asked Governor Hogan to protect pregnant women in Maryland and other states by vetoing the bill, preserving the physician only requirement for all abortions (both surgical and chemical) and by making it clear that Maryland will not promote the de-medicalization of abortion to the detriment of women's health and safety. Hogan granted the veto citing these safety concerns.

MDRTL's Bogley said that while the organization is considering additional action on this legislation, she feels that the session was successful overall, citing the defeat of several other bills including the Pregnant Person Freedom Act, which would have legalized infanticide and House Bill 1171, which could have created a state constitutional right to abortion on demand. "*It is a testament to the tenacity of the pro-life community that we have been able to defend our state Constitution from radical attacks against the right to life in three of the past four legislative sessions. The power to protect innocent human life must always reside with the people and not be held hostage by the courts*" Bogley concluded.