BYM RJWG Minute on Reproductive Justice

Approved by Working Group May 8, 2024

Friends believe that God, or the Inner Light, dwells within each of us, and that by centering into stillness, we can individually and collectively listen to that inner voice and become clear about next steps to take. We support each person’s right to seek and follow this inner voice and hold such leadings with loving concern for the individual.

The decision to have, or not have, children is an intimate, personal one, to be held lovingly in the presence of the Inner light. Baltimore Yearly Meeting supports each person’s right to choose, following the leadings of the Inner Light as they apply to their particular life situation.

Through our process of discernment, the Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends opposes laws that restrict access to contraception and abortion. We support the right of all persons to make decisions involving their own reproductive health. We believe in supporting those who make reproductive healthcare decisions that we might have made differently due to our own spiritual leadings, health and family circumstances. We respect those who hold religious views different from ours, and whose practice of religion differs from our own, as well as those who choose not to practice any religion and we oppose efforts to impose religious views on others.

We recognize that decisions regarding reproductive health are personal and may be difficult due to the person’s life circumstances. These include decisions to prevent pregnancy, to become pregnant, to abort a pregnancy, or carry a pregnancy to term. We oppose those who spread false medical information regarding abortion and contraception.

We are aware that, in the United States, persons who are in the global majority are adversely affected more than others when laws are enacted that restrict access to contraception and abortion, and that they have higher rates of complications and death from pregnancy and delivery. We are conscious also of the appalling history of interference in these rights against people of color and other minorities . Our Testimony of Equality, and our leading to become an antiracist body urges us to address and heal these inequities.

We seek and advocate for a just society that allows access for all to the full range of reproductive healthcare, and for a society in which children are protected from abuse and oppression, and have adequate food, housing, healthcare and education.