



# Joanne Benson

**Senate** District SD-024  
**Democrat**

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This legislator voted constitutionally on **0%** of the votes shown below.

★ Pro-liberty      ✗ Anti-liberty      ? Did not Vote      **Vote**

**1. HB1066 "Hate Crime" Commission** (passed 40 to 7 on 4/10/2023). Establishes the Commission on Hate Crime Response and Prevention to “develop strategies to prevent and respond to hate crime activity” and “evaluate State laws and policies.” **Yes** ✗

**2. HB967 Daishan Day** (passed 34 to 0 on 4/10/2023). Proclaims October 5 annually as Dashain Day, codifying into law a Hindu religious festival in honor of Durga, the Universal Mother Goddess. -- ?

**3. HB3 Disarming and Tracking Gun Owners** (passed 41 to 2 on 4/7/2023). Directs the Maryland State Police Gun Center to track all firearms surrendered under final protective orders and creates a statewide database for law enforcement agencies to report information on individuals who surrender firearms. **Yes** ✗

**4. HB705 'Right to Abortion' in the Maryland Constitution** (passed 33 to 14 on 3/31/2023). Proposes to amend the Maryland Constitution to declare a “fundamental right” to “reproductive freedom,” including but not limited to the ability to “prevent, continue, or end one’s own pregnancy.” **Yes** ✗

**5. HB283 Medicaid-Covered Sex Mutilation** (passed 31 to 13 on 3/31/2023). Requires Medicaid, under the “Trans Health Equity Act,” to provide coverage for “gender-affirming treatment” to all “transgender, nonbinary, intersex, two-spirit, and other gender diverse individuals.” **Yes** ✗

**6. SB36 'No-Fault Divorce'** (passed 33 to 10 on 3/20/2023). Authorizes a family court to grant an “absolute divorce” on the grounds of either a six-month separation between the parties or “irreconcilable differences” based on reasons stated by the complainant. -- ?



**Sen. Joanne Benson**

**MD Scorecard 2023**

**Lifetime Score: 0%**

**2023 Regular Session Score 0%**

The Legislative Scorecard is a nationwide educational program of The John Birch Society. Its purpose is to create an informed electorate on how state legislators are voting. The Scorecard is nonpartisan; it does not promote any candidate or political party. Bills are selected for their constitutional implications and cost to the taxpayers.

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U.S. Constitution, Amendment I --- 11 C.F.R. §114(4)(c)(4) --- 616 F.2d 45 (2d Cir. 1980)

The following scorecard lists several key votes in the Maryland General Assembly in 2023 and ranks state delegates and senators based on their fidelity to (U.S.) constitutional and limited-government principles.

This is our second state-level Scorecard; the selected votes may not be reflective of legislators' overall records. Their cumulative scores will change as we add more votes. Please check regularly for updates.



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# Bill Descriptions for the Votes that Affect You

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## 1. "Hate Crime" Commission

HB1066 establishes the Commission on Hate Crime Response and Prevention.

"Hate crimes" legislation is a farce being promoted by those who falsely believe it is the duty of government to right every wrong. This concept is not only impossible, but dangerous. The legitimate powers of government extend only to acts that are injurious to others, regardless of the perpetrator's motivations or the victim's identity. The power to arrest, prosecute, or retry a person based on allegations of "hate" is not one that should be granted. The Bill of Rights and the 14th Amendment require an "impartial jury," prevent double jeopardy, and guarantee "equal protection of the laws."

## 2. Dashain Day

HB967 proclaims October 5 annually as Dashain Day.

This bill is antithetical to Maryland's distinct Christian heritage—treating with disdain the life and character upon which its civil institutions were founded. The 1776 Constitution of Maryland required a "declaration of a belief in the Christian religion" to hold public office in the *State* (Article XXXV). Moreover, the 1623 Great Seal of Maryland is encircled with Psalm 5:12 and still used to authenticate acts of the General Assembly. Rather than defend Christian principles, and be "grateful to Almighty God," as expressed in Maryland's Declaration of Rights, legislators in Annapolis have decided to patronize multicultural polytheism. We were warned by this nation's forefathers that apart from a firm reliance on God, not to mention the removal of His commandments from capitols, courthouses, and elsewhere, our efforts shall succeed "no better than the Builders of Babel."

## 3. Disarming and Tracking Gun Owners

HB3 directs law enforcement to track all firearms surrendered under final protective orders and report certain information on related individuals.

This bill amounts to unconstitutional "searches and seizures" that automatically disarm an entire class of citizens. Protective orders often pertain to civil matters, but even persons who have made just restitution for their past wrongs retain an "unalienable" right to self-defense. Those not guilty of a violent capital or first-degree crime (e.g., murder or rape) need not suffer a permanent loss of their constitutional privileges. The Bill of Rights and the 14th Amendment guarantee the right "to keep and bear Arms" and prevent "any State" from depriving "liberty, or property, without due process of law."

## 4. 'Right to Abortion' in the Maryland Constitution

HB705 proposes to amend the Maryland Constitution to declare a "fundamental right" to "reproductive freedom," including but not limited to the ability to "prevent, continue, or end one's own pregnancy."

The care of human life—not its destruction—is the greatest responsibility of government. Maryland ought to forbid all methods of abortion and other grotesque methods of population control entirely and uphold the sanctity of life for every person, especially preborn children. The right to life is the most fundamental, God-given, and unalienable right asserted in the Declaration of Independence and protected by the Fifth and 14th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

## 5. Medicaid-Covered Sex Mutilation

HB283 requires Medicaid to provide coverage for "gender-affirming treatment."

Health care, let alone sex mutilation, is not the role of government. No person has a right to harm another using the pretext of LGBTQ+ ideology, and Medicaid is financed by immoral and anti-constitutional forms of taxation (e.g., personal or corporate income taxes) that take from citizens the wages they have duly earned. Not only do both the Bill of Rights and the 14th Amendment affirm the right to life and limb of every person, but Medicaid remains an ever-expanding and unsustainable Federal-State program that is not authorized under Article I, Section 8, of the U.S. Constitution.

## 6. 'No-Fault Divorce'

SB36 authorizes divorce on the grounds of either a six-month separation between the parties or "irreconcilable differences."

'No fault divorce' is blatantly unjust and unconstitutional. It permits persons to injure their spouses and children (e.g., adultery or abandonment) with impunity—thereby aiding and abetting violators of the marital covenant while denying victims due process of law. It also mistakenly assumes that valid grounds for divorce are to be determined exclusively, even frivolously, by the government. On the contrary, marriage is ordained by God, not the State. The most sacred of all human institutions, marriage serves as the foundation of the family. God-honoring marriages are essential to securing liberty and self-government for our children, whereas the fallout from 'no-fault divorce' has been devastating. Maryland should protect families rather than tear them apart.