



## Maryland Section

TO: The Honorable Ben Barnes, Chair  
Members, House Appropriations Committee  
The Honorable Anne Healey

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer  
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DATE: February 14, 2023

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 356 – *Public Institutions of Higher Education – Pregnant and Parenting Students – Policy*

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The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Maryland Section (MDACOG), which represents the Maryland physicians who serve the obstetrical and gynecological needs of Maryland women and their families, **supports** House Bill 356.

House Bill 356 seeks to address the issues that students who are pregnant, have recently given birth, or are non-birth parents face in attempting to advance their education, while addressing the demands associated with pregnancy and early parenthood demands. House Bill 356 requires higher education institutions to adopt policies that prohibit a requirement for pregnant students to take a leave of absence; allows pregnant students, students who have recently given birth, and non-birth parents to take a leave of absence and return in good academic standing; and requires the adoption of policies related to pregnancy discrimination awareness and other issues that impact pregnant students.

Academic success is a key factor in enabling students to become productive, self-sufficient individuals who can advance professionally and personally. The added challenges of pregnancy and the initial months after delivery can negatively impact a student, despite a desire and commitment to complete their education and advance their professional development. Passage of House Bill 356 will help ensure that institutions of higher education have policies that support the success and advancement of their students who experience a pregnancy or birth of a child. It will enhance the likelihood of success for these students as well as their ability to support their families. A favorable report is requested.