

**Committee:** Senate Education, Environment, and Energy Committee

**Bill Number:** SB 741 – Public Institutions of Higher Education - Pregnant and Parenting Students – Policy Requirements – Pregnant and Parenting Support Act

**Hearing Date:** February 28, 2024

**Position:** Support with Sponsor Amendments

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The Women’s Law Center of Maryland (WLC) supports *Senate Bill 741 – Public Institutions of Higher Education – Pregnant and Parenting Students – Policy Requirements – Pregnant and Parenting Support Act* with the sponsor’s amendments.

WLC supports initiatives to advance equity in higher education for pregnant and parenting students. While Title IX prohibits discrimination based on sex in any educational program receiving financial assistance, pregnant and parenting students still report barriers in completing their higher education requirements.<sup>1</sup> SB 741 could help eliminate these barriers by requiring higher education institutions to support students in accessing housing, financial support, and child care services.

We appreciate the sponsor’s amendments which integrate existing provisions of the law into the legislation. Maryland public higher education institutions are already required to develop and implement reproductive health access plans. The legislation builds upon this law by ensuring students are linked to a full range of health care and wraparound services. The legislation can continue Maryland’s long-standing commitment to ensuring individuals have reproductive freedom and the ability to make their own health care decisions.

We ask for a favorable report on the bill with the sponsor’s amendments. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at [relliott@policypartners.net](mailto:relliott@policypartners.net).

**The Women’s Law Center of Maryland is a private, non-profit, legal services organization that serves as a leading voice for justice and fairness for women. It advocates for the rights of women through legal assistance to individuals and strategic initiatives to achieve systemic change, working to ensure physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy for women in Maryland.**

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<sup>i</sup> [https://www.chronicle.com/article/colleges-brace-for-more-pregnant-and-parenting-students?bc\\_nonce=aa1fillrpedaijxhe3cd&cid=reg\\_wall\\_signup](https://www.chronicle.com/article/colleges-brace-for-more-pregnant-and-parenting-students?bc_nonce=aa1fillrpedaijxhe3cd&cid=reg_wall_signup)