



MARYLAND  
CATHOLIC  
CONFERENCE

March 8, 2024

**House Bill 1412**

**Abortion Care Access Grant Program and Fund – Establishment  
House Health and Government Operations Committee**

**Position: Unfavorable**

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

**House Bill 1412** establishes the Abortion Care Access Grant Program to provide grants to improve access to abortion care services for individuals in the State; establishes the Abortion Care Access Grant Program Fund as a special, nonlapsing fund to provide grants under the Program; and requires that certain premium funds collected by health insurance carriers be used to provide certain coverage and to support improving access to abortion care services under certain circumstances.

Regrettably, Maryland currently holds one of the highest abortion rates in the country and is a significant destination in the abortion travel industry. The state ranks among the top in the percentage of the population that undergoes abortions, and Maryland taxpayers already contribute millions in taxes toward providing abortions for others. Allocating further taxpayer funds to abortion facilities sends a strong message that the state prioritizes death over life. It suggests that supporting abortion is preferred over offering alternatives, such as pregnancy centers, which provide comprehensive support.

Women deserve more than just access to abortion. They require support and services that affirm their worth and emphasize the sanctity of the life they carry in their womb. As a society, it is concerning when the default response to any pregnancy is fear rather than joy. It is crucial for us to do better by walking with mothers in need and addressing the economic, social, racial, employment, and emotional barriers that may lead them to believe abortion is the only option. As Pope Francis reminds us, "All life has inestimable value, even the weakest and most vulnerable, the sick, the old, the unborn, and the poor."<sup>1</sup> The Catholic Conference actively works to ensure the protection of life from conception to natural death.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ncronline.org/news/vatican/pope-elderly-sick-unborn-poor-are-masterpieces-gods-creation>

For these reasons, the MCC asks for an unfavorable report on **HB 1412**.

Thank you for your consideration.