



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

February 17, 2021

House Bill 834

Public Health - Federal and State Funding for Abortions - Prohibition and Exceptions

House Appropriations Committee

Position: SUPPORT

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 423. The Catholic Conference represents the public policy interests of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland: the Archdioceses of Baltimore and Washington and the Diocese of Wilmington, which together encompass over one million Marylanders.

House Bill 834 prohibits federal and state funds from paying for abortion procedures, or paying for health insurance coverage that includes abortions, except in the instance of rape, or to protect the life of the mother.

The Conference supports HB 834 because it prevents taxpayer dollars from being used for the objectionable practice of abortion which ends the life of an unborn human being. The Catholic Church firmly believes in the dignity of human life from natural conception to natural death, including that of all unborn children. This bill would be a step in the right direction to protecting unborn children and their mothers from the violence of abortion.

This bill also reflects the desires of the vast majority of Americans. A Marist Poll from January of this year shows that only 38% of Americans support using tax dollars to pay for abortion. Furthermore, there is no legal requirement to publicly fund abortion, as the US Supreme Court has ruled, “The Government has no constitutional duty to subsidize an activity merely because it is constitutionally protected and may validly choose to fund childbirth over abortion.” (*Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*, 492 U. S. 490, 492 U. S. 510.)

Pope John Paul II writes that “a society lacks solid foundations when, on the one hand, it asserts values such as the dignity of the person, justice and peace, but then, on the other hand, radically acts to the contrary by allowing or tolerating a variety of ways in which human life is devalued and violated, especially where it is weak or marginalized¹.”

The Maryland Catholic Conference works to foster a culture of life by advocating for laws that uphold the dignity of the human person and that assist pregnant women in need, while working to ensure the State sets and enforces safe standards for women’s health care. It is for these reasons that the Maryland Catholic Conference respectfully urges a favorable report for **HB834**. Thank you for your consideration.

¹ Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae* (25 March 1995), 101: AAS 87 (1995), 516-518.