



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

**January 25, 2022**

**HB 164**

**Institutions of Higher Education – Pregnant Students - Policy**

**House Appropriations Committee**

**Position: SUPPORT**

The Maryland Catholic Conference (“Conference”) represents the public policy interests of the three Roman Catholic (arch)dioceses serving Maryland: the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Diocese of Wilmington.

The Church often reminds us that we are to care for all of God’s people, especially the weakest and defenseless among us. Pregnancy support services provide care and protection for some of our society’s most vulnerable members by assisting women throughout their pregnancies and as they welcome their children into the world. HB 164 will go a long way to ensure pregnant and parenting students in higher education have a higher chance at success.

Nearly 55,000 students or [one-fifth of undergraduates](#) in Maryland are parents. Student parents tend to be older (the median age is 32), financially independent, highly motivated and earn better grades than their dependent peers. However, just 8% of single mother undergraduates will earn an AA or BA within 6 years of college enrollment (compared with 49% of non-mothers).

One of the most basic barriers to student parents’ education, especially for single mothers, is knowledge of their Title IX rights for accommodation on campus. Out of 31 public colleges and universities in Maryland, only a quarter describe the Title IX rights of pregnant and parenting students on their college website. Additionally, 60% of public colleges do not list lactation spaces for breastfeeding mothers.

Without this knowledge, student mothers may drop out of college, face discrimination, or believe their school is unsupportive, creating an off-ramp to college success rather than a bridge forward.

Women of color are more likely to be student parents; 31% of Black women, 17% of mixed-race women and 16% of Latinas in college are mothers compared to 13% of White and 7% of Asian/Pacific Islander female students. - [IWPR Study](#)

Single mothers in Maryland who graduate with an A.A.:

- Are half as likely to live in poverty as a high school graduate

Single mothers in Maryland who graduate with a B.A.:

- Are 72% less likely to live in poverty than a high school graduate (9% vs 32%)
- Earn over \$650,000 more over their lifetime
- Save Maryland over \$40,000 in public assistance spending over their lifetime.
- Contribute nearly \$245,000 more in lifetime taxes<sup>1</sup>

The University of Maryland System, Maryland Community Colleges, and Maryland's other public universities and colleges should imitate Frederick Community College and [Montgomery College](#) in supporting pregnant and parenting students to college success.

The Maryland Catholic Conference appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 164.

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<sup>1</sup> [Maryland.pdf \(iwpr.org\)](#)