



Informational Statement
HB 164
Institutes of Higher Education -Pregnant Students Policy

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Maryland Right to Life supports any public policy that enables and empowers women and girls to choose life for their preborn children. We have a long history of supporting pro-life policies and programs at institutes of higher education, including the attached “Pregnant on Campus Bill of Rights”.

However, the State of Maryland should not commit public policy or public tax dollars to promote the destruction of human life through abortion. While Obama era amendments to federal Title IX require equal accommodations for pregnant students who choose abortion, the state must also accommodate students who choose life for their children by promoting and providing access to pro-life resources and providers on campus.

Maryland Right to Life invites the Assembly to demonstrate its commitment to real CHOICE for pregnant women and students, by providing equal access and participation of pro-life viewpoints, providers and resources in the development of state policy and programs.

Maryland Right to Life offers to assist any local k-12 school system or institute of higher education in the development of policies and programs supporting pregnant students. MDRTL does not recommend that any institutes of higher education adopt or incorporate any policy or program subjecting pregnant students to abortion-biased policies developed by the State in consultation with the abortion industry.

Equal Access to Life

80% of people polled support public policies that support the lives of both mothers and children. 58% oppose public funding for abortion. Public funding should be prioritized to support programs and services that support life over the *destruction* of life, including prenatal and well-baby care, Save Haven laws, affordable adoption programs and foster care reform.

Yet abortion activists in the Maryland General Assembly and the Maryland Department of Health deprive pregnant women and girls real choice and lifesaving alternatives to abortion. They fail to implement or promote existing pro-life programs like the Maryland Safe Haven Program. The state routinely discriminates against pro-life providers and resources and bars our participation in public policy and programs. In fact, Maryland law does not even require abortionists to obtain the informed consent of a woman before performing an abortion, and empowers the financially-interested abortionist to evade liability and waive parental notice requirements.

Abortion Coercion

The State of Maryland has an obligation to provide a safe and healthy environment for all students attending institutes of higher education within this state. With the [documented severity](#) of physical and psychological repercussions of abortion, protection from abortion coercion becomes even more essential in ensuring that the best interests of students are protected. Under current Maryland law, there is no explicit measure prohibiting any individual from coercing a woman into abortion.

The *majority* of women who have had abortions [\(64%\)](#) report afterward that they were pressured into the decision. Coercion encompasses any situation in which a pregnant mother is made to feel – by any means – that she has *no choice* but an abortion. Coercion sends a mother into the belief that *either the baby dies or I will die or suffer great harm*.

Pregnant students face various forms of coercion to undergo abortion. Coercion can occur because the state or school fails to provide a pregnant student options to abortion. The abortion industry typically uses the phrase “improving educational outcomes for pregnant students” pitting a pregnant mother against the very person she is entrusted to protect. They are not as interested in preventing pregnancy, as they are financially interested in preventing *live birth*.

Exploiting Pregnant Women for Profit

The state cannot reasonably entrust abortion providers and those who stand to gain financially from the sale of abortions, with the education and care of pregnant students. Yet the State guarantees a seat at the table for the National Abortion Rights Action League, Planned Parenthood, Advocates for Youth and the Maryland Assembly on School Based Health Care, among other abortion-invested parties.

The abortion industry self-identifies as *pro-choice*, but in reality, choice has little to do with the abortion transaction. Far from enshrining protections from coercion, the abortion industry operates on omission: they omit important questions about coercion during pre-abortion “counseling” and fail to provide information about the effects of a coerced abortion.

Abortion providers also have demonstrated an unwillingness to protect women and girls against sexual abuse and trafficking by refusing to report suspected abuse to law enforcement or other public authorities while agreeing to commit abortions on suspected victims.

For these reasons, we do not recommend that any institutes of higher learning adopt or incorporate any policy or program for pregnant students, that is developed by the State in consultation with the abortion industry.

We urge the State of Maryland to demonstrate your commitment to real CHOICE and be inclusive of pro-life viewpoints in formulating policies and programs for pregnant women and students.

Abortion is not health care

Abortion is not health care. It is a brutal procedure that damages women’s physical and mental health and ends the lives of their preborn children through suction, dismemberment or chemical poisoning. Maryland law permits only licensed physicians to perform abortions.

Yet recent efforts by radical abortion activist-legislators to authorize **non-physicians to prescribe chemical abortion pills**, is demonstrable evidence that abortion is *not health care*. The recklessly negligent telaboration policies enacted by this Assembly that permit students to obtain dangerous Do-It-Yourself chemical abortion pills through the mail, school health center or vending machines, will subject women to **“back-alley” style abortions** where they hemorrhage and suffer their abortions alone, and flush their babies down toilets. Abortion is not health care but the greatest human and civil rights injustice of all time.

The State of Maryland must do better for women and families.

Pregnant on Campus Bill of Rights



In the interest of presenting young women with ALL of their options, especially those guaranteed to her by law, and to ensure that pregnant and parenting students are never discriminated against, schools need to understand and communicate the following:

- I. Pregnant students cannot be barred from activities enjoyed by fellow students, including but not limited to: club memberships, academic programs, and intramural activities.
- II. Pregnant students should not be barred from utilizing campus housing and, upon birth of her child, should be permitted to make her own decision about off-campus housing.
- III. Pregnant students cannot have their academic or athletic scholarships revoked due to pregnancy or be subject to penalty regarding any other type of financial aid.
- IV. Professors and other staff may not punish pregnant students as a result of a medically necessary absence. Concessions must be made to re-take tests and complete other assignments if necessary.
- V. Instructors cannot penalize a student because of his or her parenting status.
- VI. Recipients of scholarships, athletic or otherwise, are to be fully informed of their Title IX rights. Coaches or other school officials who fail to fully inform students are to be deemed negligent.
- VII. Athletic directors or coaches may not bully students into abortions by threatening loss of future or present opportunity.
- VIII. Campus Title IX offices are responsible for ensuring this law is followed. Too often, Title IX coordinators are either complacent or complicit in violations.
- IX. Student problems and concerns must be addressed in a timely manner to ensure an uninterrupted education.
- X. Failure to provide these protections to students must be reported.

Have you been discriminated against on your campus? Contact: PregnancyResources@StudentsforLife.org