



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

February 15, 2022

Senate Bill 408

Income Tax Credit – Parent of Stillborn Child

Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

Position: SUPPORT

The Maryland Catholic Conference represents the mutual public-policy interests of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, including the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Diocese of Wilmington. We offer this testimony in support of Senate Bill 408.

24,000 babies are born still in the United States each year, with [474 babies born still](#) in Maryland in 2019. Grieving a stillbirth is a unique and tragic loss, where parents return home with empty arms. Yet stillbirth also carries an economic burden for grieving families. The cost of medical care, all the preparations they made - setting up the nursery, buying a crib and baby clothes - remain the same. There may be costs for a funeral, burial, or cremation, and counseling in the aftermath.

Providing a \$1000 tax credit for families who experienced stillbirth can ease the monetary burden during their time of grief. Seven states (AK, AZ, IN, MN, MI, MO, ND) have passed stillbirth tax credits with overwhelming bipartisan support and six more states have introduced this compassionate legislation (CA, IA, NJ, NY, OH, WI).

Supporting families after stillbirth is also an equity issue. [According to the CDC](#), stillbirth disproportionately affects Black mothers, low-income mothers, and those with higher risk pregnancies due to pre-existing medical conditions, health disparities or pregnancy of multiples. Black mothers in Maryland experience stillbirth at [twice the rate](#) of White and Hispanic mothers. Mothers in Washington, Wicomico, and Prince George's counties also faced double the rate of stillbirth, with Black mothers in these counties having still higher rates.

Maryland provides families the option of receiving a [Certificate of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth](#) in addition to the death certificate, which helps grieving families acknowledge their infant. But at tax time, moms and dads of stillborn babies can be retraumatized. Parents whose infants die even a minute after birth qualify for the child tax credit, but parents of a stillborn child do not qualify. These families carry the emotional and financial cost of parents but their grief is

compounded when they are not recognized as parents under current law. Our state is working hard to address maternal and infant mortality and morbidity but for those families in these heartbreaking situations, a financial break goes a long way.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 408.