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Patrick Moran - President

Testimony
SB 778 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program –
Children and Pregnant Women
(Healthy Babies Equity Act)
Finance Committee
March 8, 2022
FAVORABLE

AFSCME Council 3 supports SB 778. We represent the state employees who work in the Maryland Medical Assistance Program, including in our maternity healthcare clinics in the Local Health Departments in Maryland. SB 778 ensures that, regardless of immigration status comprehensive health care for the pregnant mother and through a child's first year is covered under the Medical Assistance program.

Over the years, our members at the Local Health Departments have been subjected to layoffs as county executives have campaigned against providing services to undocumented individuals and have cut maternity programs. Our members who do this work, have a professional and ethical obligation to care for their patients without discrimination. When our counties lose these important local health department programs, all residents in the county are impacted. Those seeking maternal care at our local health departments, do so often because it is the most assessable choice.

When babies are born healthy into our communities, that's less cost to the community in the future. We have the means and resources in Maryland to care for all pregnant women and children who reside here. Our State and Local Health Departments play an important role in ensuring access to this care, and no health care professional should be forced to turn anyone away because of immigration status. SB 778 is a good bill. We urge the committee to provide a favorable report. Thank you.

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