



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

March 16, 2022

Senate Bill 535

Unborn Child Protection From Dismemberment Abortion Act

Senate Finance 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 535.

SB 535 would prohibit an individual from purposely performing or attempting to perform a dismemberment abortion that kills an unborn child unless the abortion is necessary to prevent a serious health risk to the pregnant woman. The bill may not be construed to create or recognize a right to an abortion or a right to a particular method of abortion. In addition, the bill's prohibitions may be construed to prevent an abortion for any reason, including rape and incest, or by any other method.

The Maryland Catholic Conference supports SB 535 because its provisions intersect with the Church's obligation to uphold respect for all human life. The Catholic Church firmly believes in the dignity of human life from natural conception to natural death, and the partial limitations that SB 535 places on legal abortion procedures in Maryland represent a positive policy development.

The Maryland Catholic Conference works to foster a culture of life in Maryland by advocating for laws that uphold the dignity of the human person and that assist pregnant women in need, while working to ensure that the State sets and enforces safe standards for women's health care. The Conference supports legislation that would place qualifying conditions on the scope of abortions performed in Maryland, which allows abortion through all nine months of pregnancy, with essentially no restrictions on why those abortions are performed.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 535.