



# PROGRESSIVE MARYLAND

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**Testimony of Larry Stafford, Jr., Executive Director of Progressive Maryland  
HB1080 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Children and Pregnant Women  
Healthy Babies Equity Act  
March 2, 2022**

**Position: Favorable**

To Chair Pendergrass and Members of the Health & Government Operations Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of House Bill 1080. Progressive Maryland is a statewide grassroots organization with over 100,000 members, supporters, and affiliates who live in nearly every legislative district across the state. Our mission is to improve the lives of working people and families in Maryland.

**Please note Progressive Maryland's strong support for HB1080, the Healthy Babies Equity Act.** This legislation would expand eligibility for prenatal and postpartum care through Medicaid to cover all pregnant people, regardless of their immigration status. Under current Maryland law, our undocumented neighbors are ineligible for this critical coverage, which plays an enormous role in ensuring the health of both mothers and their children.

Insufficient access to prenatal care dramatically increases the risks of premature birth, serious delivery complications, and both maternal & infant mortality. Undocumented immigrants in Maryland already face numerous barriers to healthcare including linguistic obstacles, inability to take time off from work, and fear of legal repercussions for receiving health care services. These factors and many others contribute to growing health disparities that harm our undocumented neighbors. Expanding Medicaid services to include prenatal and postnatal care for all pregnant people is an important first step toward greater health equity in Maryland.

Already, seventeen states offer coverage for prenatal and postpartum care to pregnant people regardless of their immigration status. The working people of Maryland are now calling on our representatives in the General Assembly to implement this coverage here. **We respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on HB1080.**

Larry Stafford, Jr.  
Executive Director  
Progressive Maryland