



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

March 11, 2022

House Bill 1317

Health – Informed Consent (Woman’s Right to Know Act)

House Health and Government Operations Committee

Position: Support

The Catholic Conference represents the public policy interests of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, the Archdioceses of Baltimore and Washington, D.C., and the Diocese of Wilmington, which together encompass over one million Marylanders.

HB 1317 would prohibit a physician from performing an abortion unless the woman provides informed consent; establishing requirements related to the performance of an abortion, including requirements related to the provision of information, record keeping, medical emergencies, and the collection and reporting of information.

Informed consent is essential to good health care. In order for women to be in control of their own health, they need full and accurate information about any proposed medical procedure, including abortion.

We should all be skeptical of any claims that an informed consent law would interfere with the patient-provider relationship. Time spent documenting that the patient has been given full and accurate information is not time wasted. The safety of any business model that puts its own standard operating procedure ahead of a woman’s ability to make a fully-informed choice is questionable.

The bill would mandate reporting of abortion statistics to the state. This is long overdue. There are public health as well as legislative reasons for understanding the scope and effect of abortion in Maryland. Collecting accurate data is good public policy.

A 24-hour reflection period is a reasonable provision to help ensure that a pregnant woman or adolescent has time to view and understand information about her pregnancy and the abortion procedure.

It is for these reasons that the Maryland Catholic Conference respectfully urges a favorable report for HB 1317. Thank you for your consideration.