



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

March 7, 2022

House Bill 1214

Maryland Child Protection Act of 2022

House Health & Government Operations 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 House Bill 1214.

HB 1214 addresses several issues and most importantly establishes certain duties and responsibilities of a mandatory reporter and prohibits a person from assisting a minor with obtaining an abortion under certain circumstances.

This bill requires that a mandatory reporter shall “report in writing to the appropriate law enforcement or state agency every suspected instance of alleged or suspected abuse, sexual abuse, or sexual crimes against a minor in the mandatory reporter’s care.” Mandatory reporting is a direct acknowledgment that child abuse and neglect is an issue that should be taken seriously. Mandatory reporter requirements are meant to enable early detection of cases of harm to children which might otherwise evade the notice of relevant authorities or agencies. Mandatory reporter duties and responsibilities reinforce the obligation that people, such as physicians, have to protect children from abuse and harm and create a culture that is less tolerant of child abuse and neglect.

In addition to mandatory reporting requirements, HB 1214 also states that “*no person may intentionally cause, abet, or assist a minor to obtain an abortion without the consent of the minor’s parent or guardian.*” Parental consent laws protect the welfare and health of minors and help to foster family unity while protecting the constitutional rights of parents to rear their children.

For these reasons, we urge a **FAVORABLE** report on House Bill 1214.