



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

**March 11, 2022**

**House Bill 583**

**Public Health – Abortions – Prenatal Diagnosis of Down Syndrome  
(Down Syndrome Dignity Act)**

**House Health and Government Operations Committee**

**Position: Support**

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

**House Bill 583** prohibits abortion when the decision is made to terminate because the fetus has a prenatal diagnosis of Down syndrome.

Down syndrome is the most common chromosomal condition, affecting one out of every 700 pregnancies in the US. People with Down syndrome may face additional challenges in life. But most people with Down syndrome lead healthy, interdependent lives and their life expectancy has increased from 25 in 1983 to 60 today.<sup>1</sup>

The Conference supports HB 583 because it would prohibit the discriminatory practice of permitting abortion based solely on one's disability or characteristics. Weighted studies find 67% of pregnancies with Down syndrome are terminated in the US.<sup>2</sup> The Catholic Church firmly believes in the dignity of human life from natural conception to natural death, including that of all unborn children.

It is for these reasons that the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for a favorable report for **HB 583**. Thank you for your consideration.

---

<sup>1</sup> [National Down Syndrome Society](#)

<sup>2</sup> Natoli et.al, [Prenatal Diagnosis](#), Feb. 2012.