
BILL NO: House Bill 1101
TITLE: Maryland Maternity Care Access Program, Fund and Income Tax Checkoff -
Establishment
COMMITTEE: Health and Government Operations
HEARING DATE: March 16, 2023
POSITION: **OPPOSE**

The Women's Law Center of Maryland is a statewide, non-profit legal service organization that provides direct legal representation to survivors of domestic violence and advocates legislatively on issues related to the physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy of women in Maryland. Part of that advocacy includes supporting women in their reproductive choices so that they are able to build their families how and when they want and ensuring that women's reproductive health care is treated equitably and fairly as a medical issue and not a political one. We oppose House Bill 1101 as it sits squarely in the realm of the politicization of health care and promoting anti-abortion facilities, under the guise of supporting women's health.

House Bill 1101 aims to establish the "Maryland Maternity Care Access Program" in order to develop and sustain pregnancy support centers throughout Maryland. These pregnancy support centers as described in the bill are widely known as Crisis Pregnancy Centers (CPCs). CPCs advertise themselves as legitimate clinical centers offering medical advice regarding pregnancy and reproductive health¹. In reality, CPCs seek to intercept vulnerable women with unintended pregnancies who might be considering abortion and convince them otherwise using fear-mongering and dubious medical research, such as false claims that abortion can cause health conditions such as breast cancer². As CPCs seek to blur the lines between anti-abortion advocacy and health care, organizations such as the American Medical Association³ and the National Institute for Health⁴ have published articles raising concerns about the ethics and risks associated with CPCs, while the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists actively warns people seeking reproductive health care to avoid them⁵.

If enacted, this legislation would provide funding for these centers, in part specifically allocating \$3,000,000 of the Governor's annual budget to the Program. As of 2021, CPCs already outnumbered abortion providers in Maryland 2:1⁶. There is zero reason to support the continued growth of these dangerous anti-abortion facilities.

The Women's Law Center of Maryland prioritizes the safety and wellbeing of Maryland women. For these reasons, we strongly urge an unfavorable report on House Bill 1101.

The Women's Law Center of Maryland is a private, non-profit legal services organization that serves as a leading voice for justice and fairness for women. It advocates for the rights of women through legal representation for individuals and statewide advocacy to achieve systemic change.

¹ The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, *Crisis Pregnancy Centers Issue Brief*, <https://www.acog.org/advocacy/abortion-is-essential/trending-issues/issue-brief-crisis-pregnancy-centers>

² AMA Journal of Ethics, Why Crisis Pregnancy Centers are Legal but Unethical, <https://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/article/why-crisis-pregnancy-centers-are-legal-unethical/2018-03>

³ Bryant, Amy, *Why Crisis Pregnancy Centers Are Legal But Unethical*, American Medical Association Journal of Ethics, 2018; 20(3):269-277.

⁴ Montoya, Melissa; Judge-Golden, Colleen; and Swartz, Jonas, *The Problems with Crisis Pregnancy Centers: Reviewing the Literature and Identifying New Directions for Future Research*, International Journal for Women's Health, 2022; 14: 757-763.

⁵ American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, *Issue Brief: Crisis Pregnancy Centers*, October 2022.

⁶ The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, *Abortion Training and Education*, <https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/committee-opinion/articles/2014/11/abortion-training-and-education>