



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

March 16, 2023

House Bill 958

Public Health – Abortion

House Health and Government Operations Committee

Position: Favorable

The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

HB 958 seeks to accomplish many objectives; most importantly prohibiting abortion after detection of a fetal heartbeat. This bill addresses issues such as testing, informed consent, and recordkeeping requirements which are consistent with common-sense abortion regulations. HB 958 also attempts to secure additional protection for unborn children, namely, those whose hearts have begun to beat. By calling a halt to the intentional taking of innocent human lives with beating hearts, the prohibition section of the bill calls upon the courts to allow states to provide a level of protection for unborn children against abortion that is more consistent with basic human dignity.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for a favorable report on **HB 958**.

Thank you for your consideration.