



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

March 16, 2023

House Bill 973

Health - Abortion - Ultrasound and Waiting Period

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 973 would prohibit a physician from performing or inducing an abortion on a pregnant woman within 24 hours after the woman receives certain ultrasound imaging. Giving a woman the ability to view an ultrasound image, hear the fetal heartbeat, and have time to consider this information is a needed process for a woman to make an informed decision. Women deserve to have basic, relevant, and medically appropriate information; as well as the time to evaluate their options during pregnancy. To deny women the ability to view an ultrasound image or prevent them from hearing a fetal heartbeat would be denying them vital information that would block them from making a truly informed decision regarding an abortion.

We should be providing women all the pertinent information when making a decision. This bill would provide women accurate and complete information when making a decision regarding an abortion.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for a favorable report on **HB 973**.

Thank you for your consideration.