



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

March 16, 2023

House Bill 1101

**Maryland Maternity Care Access Program, Fund, and Income Tax Checkoff –
Establishment**

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 1101 establishes the Maryland Maternity Care Access Program in the Maryland Department of Health to develop and sustain pregnancy support centers in the State. HB 1101 would create a Fund to service pregnancy support centers in the State. The bill would create an income tax checkoff system for voluntary contributions for those taxpayers who donate to the fund, and would require the Governor, beginning in Fiscal Year 2025, (and each fiscal year thereafter) to include an appropriation of 3 million dollars to the program in the Annual State Budget.

Pregnancy Support/Resource Centers are the backbone of a sanctuary for life. They accompany and help women during their difficult times. They respond with love, and provide help, resources, and direct assistance so mothers can choose life. In 2017, 29,800 abortions were provided in Maryland, which was a 7% increase in the abortion rate in Maryland between 2014 and 2017. Pregnancy Support/Resource Centers are already helping and serving many women and children in our State; this bill would help these Centers even more by allowing the State to receive contributions for these Centers from taxpayers and other sources. This funding will allow the Centers to help even more vulnerable women and children. Furthermore, as the bill would provide a dedicated funding source via the Governor's Budget, the Pregnancy Support/Resources Centers would be able to help even more pregnant women and their children. As a State, we need to help those mothers who make the choice to have and parent a child. Women deserve more options than abortion. This bill will help support Pregnancy

Support/Resource Centers by allowing taxpayers the ability to donate to life affirming causes. This bill will also help vulnerable women and children in need by providing that the government allocate funding for those women who choose life.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for a favorable report on **HB 1101**.

Thank you for your consideration.