



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

February 23, 2023

House Bill 641

Income Tax - Pregnancy Options Tax Credit

House Ways and Means Committee

Position: Favorable

The Maryland 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.

House Bill 641 allows a credit against the State income tax for a certain amount of donations to eligible charitable organizations that operate as Pregnancy Resource Centers.

House Bill 641 grants a taxpayer a credit against the State income tax if they donate to a Pregnancy Resource Center. The bill defines a Pregnancy Resource Center as an organization or facility in the State that (1) as its primary purpose, is established and operates to provide pregnancy counseling and/or information; (2) does not perform, induce, or refer for abortions; (3) provides its services at no cost to its clients; and (4) provides direct client services at its facility. Pregnancy centers offer a wide range of services and resources for expecting mothers who need assistance but want to have and parent a child. Some of these resources and services include, but are not limited to: (a) pregnancy testing; (b) food and/or shelter assistance; (c) parenting and pre-natal education classes; and (d) medical services. In 2021, there were approximately 3,000 pregnancy center locations in the U.S. (counting medical mobile units as separate locations).¹

Pregnancy 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 2017.²

¹ <https://lozierinstitute.org/fact-sheet-pregnancy-centers-serving-women-and-saving-lives-2020/>

² <https://www.gutmacher.org/fact-sheet/state-facts-about-abortion-maryland>

Pregnancy Resource Centers are already helping and serving many women and children in our State; this bill would allow them to help even more. 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 Resource Centers by allowing taxpayers the ability to donate to life affirming causes.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for a favorable report on **HB 641**.

Thank you for your consideration.