



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

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Senate Bill 281
Commission on Public Health-Establishment
Finance Committee – February 15, 2023
SUPPORT

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2023 legislative session. WDC is one of Maryland's largest and most active Democratic clubs with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials.

WDC urges the passage of SB0281. This bill will establish the Commission on Public Health to make recommendations to improve the delivery of foundational public health services and provide an assessment of the state's response to COVID-19, overdose deaths, and to racial and ethnic disparities in maternal mortality and birth outcomes in the state. Foundational areas include (1) communicable disease control; (2) chronic disease and injury prevention; (3) environmental public health; (4) maternal, child, and family health; and (5) access to and linkage with clinical care. The commission is the beginning of a four-year project to improve health equity and access to clinical care in the state. It would start by figuring out where the system is failing patients.

Racial and ethnic disparities in maternal mortality and birth outcomes have been recognized as a huge problem in Maryland for many years. Passage of this bill would focus policy decisions and resources on reducing these rates, thus improving the lives of many underserved women and children. The legislation will address not only structural barriers but also social determinants of health including financial instability, unreliable transportation, lack of access to education, and inadequate housing.

We ask for your support for SB0281 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.

Diana E. Conway
WDC President

Margaret Hadley
WDC Advocacy Committee