



The Maryland State Medical Society
63711 Cathedral Street
Baltimore, MD 263701-5516
410.539.0872
Fax: 410.547.0915
1.800.492.1056
www.medchi.org

TO: The Honorable Ben Barnes, Chair
Members, House Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Shaneka Henson

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman
Andrew G. Vetter
Christine K. Krone
410-244-7000

DATE: February 27, 2024

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 771 – *Public Senior Higher Education Institutions – Pregnant and Parenting Students – Policy Requirements (Pregnant and Parenting Support Act)*

On behalf of The Maryland State Medical Society, the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Maryland Section of The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, we submit this letter of **support** for House Bill 771.

House Bill 771 seeks to address the issues that students who are pregnant, have recently given birth, or are non-birth parents face in attempting to advance their education, while addressing the demands associated with pregnancy and early parenthood demands. House Bill 771 requires higher education institutions to adopt policies related to pregnant and parenting students that is consistent with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which includes a prohibition of a requirement for pregnant students to take a leave of absence; allows pregnant students, students who have recently given birth, and non-birth parents to take a leave of absence and return in good academic standing; and requires the adoption of policies related to pregnancy discrimination awareness and other issues that impact pregnant students. The bill also requires the policy to include requirements for referrals to on-campus and off-campus services regarding the availability of or eligibility for government assistance programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the Childcare Scholarship Program, Medicaid, and the Children’s Health Insurance Program as well as referrals to on-campus and off-campus health care service providers.

Academic success is a key factor in enabling students to become productive, self-sufficient individuals who can advance professionally and personally. The added challenges of pregnancy and the initial months after delivery can negatively impact a student, despite a desire and commitment to complete their education and advance their professional development. Passage of House Bill 771 will help ensure that institutions of higher education have policies that support the success and advancement of their students who experience a pregnancy or birth of a child. It will enhance the likelihood of success for these students as well as their ability to support their families. A favorable report is requested.