

**Committee:** House Economic Matters

**Bill:** House Bill 1283 – Insurance – Discrimination – Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

**Hearing Date:** March 7, 2024

**Position:** Support

---

The Women's Law Center of Maryland supports *House Bill 1283 – Insurance – Discrimination – Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity*. The bill would prohibit insurers carriers and producers from discrimination in making insurance policy determinations based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The legislation would make Maryland law consistent with Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act, and it would make it clear that the Maryland Insurance Commission could bring action under state law if the Insurance Commissioner finds that a carrier or producer has discriminated against someone who is insured or seeking insurance on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide more information, please contact Robyn Elliott at [relliott@policypartners.net](mailto:relliott@policypartners.net).

Discourse on criminal justice policy and reentry reform tend to either ignore or marginalize the significance of the growing number of incarcerated women, especially those who are parenting. Similarly, the Federal Bureau of Prisons and state departments of corrections have yet to fully recognize the distinct gender- and family-specific considerations of incarcerating pregnant women and mothers with minor children. Across the country, there are few prison-based programs specifically designed for pregnant and parenting women, and none in Maryland. The inadequacy of services for these women is not limited to incarceration settings but affects women at every point in their involvement with the criminal justice system. Pre-trial diversion and release services, court-sentenced alternatives and re-entry programs for

mothers are restricted in number, size, and effectiveness because the system was developed to serve men.<sup>i</sup>

This bill is critical to recognize the unique support needs of formerly incarcerated women. We strongly urge a favorable report. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at [relliott@policypartners.net](mailto:relliott@policypartners.net) or (443) 926-3443.

**The Women’s Law Center of Maryland is a private, non-profit, legal services organization that serves as a leading voice for justice and fairness for women. It advocates for the rights of women through legal assistance to individuals and strategic initiatives to achieve systemic change, working to ensure physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy for women in Maryland.**

---

<sup>i</sup> Mothers Behind Bars: A state-by-state report card and analysis of federal policies on conditions of confinement for pregnant and parenting women and the effect on their children. <https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/mothersbehindbars2010.pdf>