



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

March 15, 2024

House Bill 276

Health – Abortion Data – Submission to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

House Health and Government Operations Committee

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) 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 276 proposes that the Maryland Department of Health should provide the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) with any requested abortion data, except in cases where federal or State law prohibits such submission.

Maryland has not reported abortion data to the CDC since 2006, and the Maryland Department of Health does not maintain records on induced terminations.¹ The absence of data reporting hinders our understanding of how abortion impacts women, children, and families in the state. Additionally, such data is crucial for observing public health trends, including vital statistics such as age, race/ethnicity, marital status, previous live births, period of gestation, and previous induced abortions of women obtaining legal induced abortions.² Regular and frequent analysis of this data would enable public health surveillance, facilitating the examination of demographic, socioeconomic, and clinical outcomes related to abortion.

Access to abortion data is essential for assessing the associated morbidity risks, and the Catholic Conference emphasizes its commitment to protecting women and the sanctity of life from conception to natural death. This data would not only assist in understanding the need for services to support pregnant women, but also align with the duty to care for the unborn as a fundamental aspect of basic care. The aggregation of data will provide valuable insights into the reality of women in Maryland seeking assistance during pregnancy, helping communities better

¹ <https://lozierinstitute.org/abortion-reporting-maryland/>

² <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/data-sources-and-methods/data-sources/surveillance-data-abortion>

understand and meet their needs. Therefore, House Bill 276 is seen as a necessary step in obtaining essential public health information to care for the well-being of women and children. The Catholic Conference urges support for House Bill 276 to ensure the availability of critical data for the welfare of women and the unborn.

For these reasons, the MCC asks for a favorable report on **HB 276**.

Thank you for your consideration.