



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

March 6, 2025

Senate Bill 848
Public Health Abortion Grant Program - Establishment
Senate Finance and Budget and Taxation Committee

Position: Unfavorable

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.

Senate Bill 848 establishes the Public Health Abortion Grant Program to provide grants to improve access to abortion care clinical services for individuals in the State; establishing the Public Health Abortion Grant Program Fund as a special, nonlapsing fund to provide grants under the Program; and requiring that certain premium funds collected by health insurance carriers be used to provide certain coverage and to support improving access to abortion care clinical services under certain circumstances.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) mandates that all enrollees, regardless of gender or age, contribute \$1 per month toward abortion coverage, leading to a surplus of funds.¹ This surplus suggests that the demand for abortion is lower than anticipated, with more women choosing life and carrying their pregnancies to term. Rather than using these surplus funds to sustain abortion services—especially when they disproportionately affect women of color and those in difficult socioeconomic circumstances—legislation should prioritize supporting women and families. Redirecting resources toward maternal healthcare, financial assistance, and pregnancy support services would empower women to choose life, address systemic inequities, and help reduce the economic pressures that often make abortion seem like the only option.

Funds saved from insurance premiums should not be redirected to support abortion, as doing so further entrenches a throwaway culture that disregards the dignity and worth of unborn children. Every human life, from the moment of conception, has inherent dignity and deserves to be protected and nurtured. Statistics show that abortion disproportionately affects certain demographics, with higher lifetime abortion rates among non-Hispanic Black women compared to non-Hispanic White women, among cohabiting women compared to married women, and

¹ <https://housedocs.house.gov/energycommerce/ppacacon.pdf>

among women with some college education compared to college graduates.² These disparities highlight the need for policies that support women and families rather than expanding abortion access.

Abortion clinics do not provide essential follow-up care for women who may experience physical and emotional trauma from chemical or surgical abortions. Yet, this bill proposes using federal funds to expand abortion services instead of allocating surplus funds to labor and delivery costs or pregnancy centers that offer critical, life-affirming support.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for an unfavorable report on **SB 848**.

Thank you for your consideration.

² <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1475-6773.14358?af=R#:~:text=In%20this%20adjusted%20model%2C%20Medicaid,a%20higher%20risk%20of%20abortion.&text=Critical%20to%20interpretation%20of%20results,these%20assumptions%20in%20Appendix%202>.