



## TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

### SB 156: Universal Newborn Nurse Home Visiting Services- Program Establishment and Insurance Coverage

**POSITION: Support**

**BY: Linda Kohn, President**

**DATE: January 29, 2025**

The League of Women Voters Maryland believes every resident should have access to affordable, equitable, quality health care. The League also supports government and community programs to promote the well-being, development, and safety of all children. **The League thus supports Senate Bill 156: Universal Newborn Nurse Home Visiting Services**, to establish a program providing voluntary home visiting nurse services to all Maryland families with newborns.

Per the March of Dimes,<sup>1</sup> **Maryland's infant mortality rate** (death occurring during the first year of life) **in 2022 was 6.0 per 1,000 live births. The U.S rate that year was 5.6.** There are ways Maryland newborns and their families can stay safer. Home nursing visits to provide screening, education, case management, and support tailored to the individual needs of families with newborns, is a particularly successful and cost-effective method.

Visiting nurses in the home setting are advocates for the entire family. They identify and evaluate the needs of both newborn and parent, providing assistance, resources, referrals, and reassurance in a comfortable setting that allows time to develop trust. **Without a physically AND emotionally healthy parent, the newborn will not thrive.**

Nurse home visits focus not only on the health and proper development of the newborn, but also on evaluating the home environment, reinforcing parenting skills, and strengthening bonding, thus reducing the possible stress, anxiety, fear and postpartum depression many new parents can experience.

Home nurse visits can help identify problems early, thus enabling early intervention to resolve them. **The League of Women Voters Maryland, representing 1,500+ concerned members throughout Maryland, urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 156.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.marchofdimes.org/peristats/data?reg=99&top=6&stop=370&lev=1&slev=4&obj=35&sreg=24&creg>