

Testimony in Favor of HB 1357

By Michael J. New, Ph.D.

Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee. I am a resident of Hyattsville, MD and I speak to you as a concerned citizen in support of HB 1357 “Public Health Care Data Report.”

I have both a Ph.D. in Political Science and a Masters Degree in Statistics both from Stanford University. I am an Assistant Professor of Practice at the Busch School of Business at the Catholic University of America. I am also a Senior Associate Scholar at the Charlotte Lozier Institute, the research and education arm of the Susan B. Anthony List. I have done academic research on the impact of pro-life laws and have made extensive use of CDC abortion data. Two of my studies on this topic have appeared in *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* which is the top state politics journal in the country.

I will keep this written testimony brief. Currently, Maryland is an outlier. Maryland is one of three states has not reported any abortion data to the CDC since 2005(California and New Hampshire are the others). In the CDC’s 2022 Abortion Surveillance report which was released in November 2024, Maryland was one of only four states that did not report any abortion data.¹ Many states where there is strong sentiment in favor of legal abortion willingly and routinely report abortion data to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) on an annual basis. Furthermore, data about the incidence of abortion is not readily available on the Maryland Department of Health website.

Regardless of one’s position on the legality of abortion, more timely and accurate data on the incidence of abortion has the potential to improve public policy. More accurate abortion data would provide useful information about the effects of sex education programs, the effects of contraception programs, the incidence of statutory rape, and the impact of various abortion regulations. Again, regardless of your position on legal abortion, everyone should be in favor of accurate and timely data on the incidence of abortion in Maryland.

Furthermore, this piece of legislation would require that “Maryland Department of Health to collect and compile annual data on the costs of birth, postpartum care, pregnancy care and abortion. Maryland’s Medicaid program plays a large role in assisting pregnant women. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation,

¹ Ramer S, Nguyen A, Hollier L, et al. “Abortion Surveillance 2022” *Mortality and Morbidity Weekly Report* 73(7) 1-28, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023 November 28.
https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/72/ss/ss7209a1.htm?s_cid=ss7209a1_w (Accessed February 24, 2025)

Maryland's Medicaid program paid for 27,290 births in 2023, which is 42 percent of the total.² Effective April 1, 2022 Maryland's Medicaid program has extended coverage to pregnant women for 1 year postpartum.³ Overall, this piece of legislation would give legislators and policymakers some very powerful information about how to most effectively help pregnant women and new mothers in need. Please vote in favor of HB 1357.

² <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/state-indicator/births-financed-by-medicaid> (Accessed February 24, 2025)

³ <https://health.maryland.gov/newsroom/Pages/Maryland-Department-of-Health-announces-expanded-Medicaid-coverage-for-new-mothers.aspx>