



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

March 5, 2026

House Bill 1131

Public Health - Pregnancy Loss - Prohibited Actions (Pregnancy Outcome Protection Act)

House Judiciary and Health Committee

Position: Information

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 1131 prohibits individuals who experienced a pregnancy loss from being subject to investigation, civil liability, or criminal prosecution except under certain circumstances; establishing a private right of action for a violation of a certain prohibition against investigations of pregnancy loss; providing that an incidence of pregnancy loss does not constitute probable cause to issue a certain search warrant, except under certain circumstances.

This legislation recognizes the serious concerns that arise when pregnancy outcomes are treated as grounds for criminal investigation. Criminalizing pregnant women for actions allegedly intended to harm their unborn child can undermine trust in the medical system. When patients fear legal consequences, they may be less likely to seek medical care, disclose relevant information, or engage openly with healthcare providers. The possibility of law enforcement involvement can erode the confidential patient–practitioner relationship and, in extreme cases, lead to women being treated as suspects rather than patients during moments of medical crisis

For Maryland families, 1 in every 144 pregnancies ends in stillbirth, and families are 6.5 times more likely to lose a baby to stillbirth than to SIDS.¹ Grieving a stillbirth is a unique and devastating loss, as parents return home with empty arms. Supporting families after stillbirth is also an issue of equity. According to the CDC, stillbirth disproportionately affects Black mothers, low-income mothers, and those with higher-risk pregnancies due to pre-existing medical conditions and health disparities. In Maryland, Black mothers experience stillbirth at twice the

¹ <https://countthekicks.org/2023/04/maryland-launch/>

rate of White and Hispanic mothers.² Maryland currently allows families to request a Certificate of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth alongside a death certificate, providing some acknowledgment of their loss.

Life begins at conception, and every unique and irreplaceable human life deserves protection. Many women struggle with fertility, and for those who conceive, pregnancy is often accompanied by profound gratitude and recognition of life's inherent value. Any form of coercion or force that compels a woman to ingest abortion-inducing medication is immoral. With the availability of abortion pills, such as mifepristone and misoprostol, through online orders, the risks outlined in this legislation become even more pressing. This ease of access makes it alarmingly possible for women, particularly victims of domestic violence, to be coerced into unwanted abortions. If a woman ingests these medications against her will, she has only 72 hours to receive a prescribed abortion pill reversal treatment using progesterone, which could potentially save her pregnancy.³

Public policy must carefully balance the protection of women from unjust criminalization with the protection of unborn life, while also guarding against coercion and affirming the dignity of every human person.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for this information to be considered on **HB 1131**.

Thank you for your consideration.

²https://health.maryland.gov/vsa/Documents/Reports%20and%20Data/Infant%20Mortality/InfantMortalityAnnualReport_2021_Final.pdf#:~:text=In%202021%2C%20there%20were%20200%20deaths%20among,infants%20born%20to%20non%2D%20Hispanic%20Asian%20or

³ <https://abortionpillreversal.com/abortion-pill-reversal/faq>