



Abortion Regulation and Enforcement in Maryland

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Overview

After nearly fifty years of federal abortion mandates, the Supreme Court decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* (2022) finally returned the power to restrict abortion to the legislatures, *both* federal and state.

Maryland Right to Life supports unqualified legal protection for preborn human beings as persons due the equal protection of our laws. State legislative leaders should recognize their Constitutional authority to restrict or prohibit abortion practices and funding in Maryland. The 2024 legislative session will be the best opportunity to introduce and enact pro-life legislation before the potential ratification of the “**Reproductive Freedom**” Amendment to the Maryland Constitution through the November 2024 ballot.

Although the Maryland General Assembly previously enacted public policies and programs intended to regulate abortion providers to ensure women's health and safety, many safeguards have been repealed. Enforcement and implementation of the remaining regulations have been neglected due to the state's prioritization of abortion over childbirth. Nevertheless, public funding continues to be appropriated annually to departments for these defunct programs.

This report makes recommendations about existing policies and programs that must be revived in order to restore the intent of the legislature and the integrity of public health in Maryland. We ask that legislative leaders provide comprehensive oversight of these existing public policies and programs, with the goals to protect women's health and safety and to enable more mothers and fathers to choose life for their preborn children.

Life After *Roe*

The National Right to Life Committee published the results of a 2022 McLaughlin poll measuring public opinions on abortion following the Court's reversal of *Roe v. Wade* (1973). The poll reported that more than 72% of voters would support protective laws which restrict abortion only to cases of rape, incest, life of the mother *and* medical emergency. That means that the vast majority of Americans favor the elimination of 95% of all abortions.

But while many states are choosing to move forward with legislative protections for preborn human beings that reflect public opinion and advances in medical science, the state of Maryland has taken a regressive and even *oppressive* approach to women's reproductive health. Maryland

law is extreme on abortion and provides few protections for women and preborn children. As one of only six states in the nation that allows unrestricted access to abortion in post-*Roe* America, **Maryland has been positioned to serve as a regional destination for late term abortion on demand.**

Abortion deaths and **taxpayer funding for abortions** in Maryland are expected to increase dramatically as the abortion industry coordinates interstate abortion trafficking of women and girls seeking elective and even late term abortions permitted in Maryland. If Maryland suffers a similar fate to Illinois, where abortions reportedly increased by 700% due to interstate abortion trafficking, Maryland taxpayer costs for abortions obtained by *non-residents* could increase by \$10 million per year.¹

Because the state of Maryland is sponsoring and promoting this **abortion trafficking**, the state has a heightened duty to ensure that abortion practices and providers licensed or certified in Maryland are held to a high standard of medical scrutiny. The state should consistently enforce existing safety regulations and enact additional legal safeguards to protect women's health and to prevent predatory practices including the human or sex trafficking of women and girls in Maryland.

Background

In 1992, Maryland became one of the first states to codify *Roe v. Wade* (1973) in statute. But the **Maryland Freedom of Choice Act** of 1991 went much further than *Roe*, creating a broad definition of "health" that grants abortionists broad discretion to commit abortions beyond viability through birth.² As a result, Maryland has one of the highest rates of abortion per capita among the United States, with an estimated 36,000 children dying through abortion violence in the previous year. One third of these abortions were taxpayer funded *elective* abortions.

Since 1979, Maryland has used taxpayer funds to pay for abortions through state **Medicaid**.³ Maryland is one of only four states that funds abortion. In 2019 the Maryland General Assembly enacted a bill to appropriate another \$3.2 million with annual increases to the **Maryland Family Planning Program**, to subsidize abortion providers who refused to comply with federal Title X regulations. In 2023 the Assembly enacted the **Abortion Care Access Act**, which removed one of the final safeguards in law for women and allowed non-physicians to perform or provide

¹ [Planned Parenthood Saw 700% Spike in Abortion Patients Traveling to Illinois Post-Roe \(jezebel.com\)](https://www.jezebel.com/Planned-Parenthood-Saw-700-Spike-in-Abortion-Patients-Traveling-to-Illinois-Post-Roe-jezebel.com)

² Md. Code Ann., Health-Gen. Section 20-209.

³ Md. Regs. Code tit. 10, Sections 09.02.04(G), 09/34.04(A)(5), 09.34.04(B)(2).

abortions. The law makes Maryland a state-sponsor of abortion, committing \$3.5 million annually in taxpayer funds to train a substandard non-physician abortion workforce.⁴

Maryland is one of only four jurisdictions that waive Centers for Disease Control (CDC) **reporting requirements** for abortion providers. Maryland does not have an **informed consent** law to protect women's health when seeking an abortion. **Conscience protections** for medical providers and employers are weak and regularly targeted through legislation.⁵

Parental rights also are weakened under state law. While the legislature enacted a parental notice law for girls under the age of sixteen, the law contains a loophole that allows the profit-minded abortionist to waive the notice requirement.⁶ Maryland law does not require **sex education curriculum** to be medically accurate nor age appropriate and the profit-driven abortion industry is the primary provider of sex ed curriculum and training within schools. Maryland is also one of a small number of states that permits and funds **destructive human embryonic research**, which has failed to result in any cure for disease.

I. The 2012 Abortion Clinic Regulations

The state cannot credibly or responsibly promote abortion as a safe practice in Maryland. Existing regulations to ensure the health and safety of abortion clinics in Maryland have either been repealed or are ineffective and not routinely enforced. In 2012, after a woman from New Jersey was severely injured during a late term abortion in Maryland, the State of Maryland tasked the Office of Healthcare Quality (OHCQ) with the inspection of surgical abortion facilities.⁷ Abortion clinics in Maryland have since been required *on paper* to meet the same health standards as other ambulatory surgical centers in the state. While the state purportedly continues to collect licensing fees from abortion clinic licensees every three years, the inspection of abortion clinics is not required but is merely complaint-driven, and therefore extremely limited.

Because legal enforcement and professional disciplinary actions are rarely applied to abortion providers, injured women or their surviving families have little recourse or remedy other than through civil legal action. Such was the case of a notorious late-term abortionist and serial offender licensed and practicing in Montgomery County, Maryland whom the state allowed to

⁴ Md. Code Ann., Health-Gen. Section 13-4702.

⁵ Md. Code Ann., Health-Gen. Section 20-214.

⁶ Md. Code Ann., Health-Gen. Section 20-103.

⁷ COMAR 10.12.01.01-.20; See also Md. Regs. Code 10.12.04-.05 (B)(2), .10, .17-.20.

remain in practice until his retirement in 2022. The abortionist was responsible for the deaths of at least two women including Christin Gilbert, a 19 year-old who was killed during a 29-week abortion in 2005, and Jennifer Morbelli, a New York citizen who was killed during a 33-week abortion in 2021. But the families had little recourse under Maryland law, which puts abortion profits before patients.

This licensed abortion practice allegedly sent at least 23 women to the hospital from abortion injuries between 2012 and 2022, including two women who sued in 2021 after suffering life-threatening injuries during abortion procedures. The abortionist recklessly sent the two women to hospital emergency rooms for severe complications suffered from elective abortion procedures after the state exempted abortion businesses as “essential providers” from Covid lockdown orders. Despite these ongoing and egregious violations, the state was reluctant to inspect the abortion practice and continues to license the abortion clinic to operate to this day.

Need for Oversight

A. Facility Inspection

- Abortion clinics are required to pay a licensing fee of \$1,500 every three years under the 2012 clinic regulations.
- The most recent inspection of a facility due to a complaint occurred in the Fall of 2021 according to the 2021 OHCQ Annual Report and Staffing Analysis.
- The number of renewal surveys conducted by the OHCQ has declined significantly since 2020.
- The OHCQ does not publish the total number of complaints received.

B. Provider Inspection

- Abortion providers are subject to licensing and oversight by the Maryland Board of Physicians, or the Maryland Board of Nursing or to unspecified certification under the Maryland Department of Health.
- The *Abortion Care Access Act* of 2022 commits \$3.5 million in annual public funding to train non-physician abortionists under the **Abortion Care Clinical Training Program**.⁸
- This legislation did not include relevant parameters such as who will be providing the training, the type of license, number of trainees, dollars spent, complaint process, and who will provide oversight of these providers.

⁸ Md. Code Ann., Health-General Section 13-4702.

Solutions

- Mandatory inspections should be required for licensure renewal every three years. If the OHCQ refuses to enforce regulations, legislators should remove budget appropriations for the OHCQ.
- The legislature should provide vigilant oversight and require an annual report of the **Abortion Care Clinical Training Program** that reports the following information and metrics: a list of training and certifying entities, the amount of taxpayer dollars paid to each training or certifying entity, a description of certification requirements, a description of the marketing and recruitment notices sent by the program, including whether they are recruiting students enrolled in Maryland public schools, the number of trainees certified, and the cost per each trainee.
- The state should provide oversight of the number and nature of complaints or disciplinary actions related to non-physician abortion providers certified through the program.
- The legislature should enact a law to attach annual abortion reporting requirements to any licensure or funding for abortion clinics in the state.

Conclusion

If the state of Maryland wants citizens to accept that abortion is healthcare, then abortion must be held to the same health and safety standards as any other ambulatory surgical practice. The legislature must secure its oversight authority over the Maryland Department of Health and Office of Healthcare Quality and condition any budget appropriations to the consistent inspection of abortion clinics and transparent reporting of abortion incidents.

II. Protections Against Abortion Coercion and Sex-Trafficking

The connection between abortion and human trafficking cannot be ignored. Laura Lederer, formerly Senior Advisor on Trafficking in Persons for the State Department, testified before a Congressional subcommittee that over 55% of trafficked women had at least one abortion, 30% had multiple, and over half reported that they were forced into their abortion.⁹ This past session, reckless legislation was enacted that shields abortionists from being held liable for interstate abortion trafficking. Maryland Right to Life testified to the connection between abortion and sex-trafficking, citing a groundbreaking study by the Beazley Institute that found that 66 human-

⁹ <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/IF/IF14/20140911/102647/HHRG-113-IF14-Wstate-LedererL-20140911.pdf>

trafficking survivors reported a total of 114 abortions. Nearly 30% of these victims said they were taken to Planned Parenthood.¹⁰ Without critical intervention, these abortion shield laws will have devastating effects on the safety of women and girls caught in interstate human trafficking.

Need for Oversight

A. House Bill 808/Senate Bill 859 (Chapter 247, 2023)

In summary, these bills as enacted into law, prohibit interstate cooperation in criminal proceedings against an abortion provider initiated by another state if the abortion procedure is legal in Maryland.

- This would present challenges for other states holding traffickers accountable for abortion coercion when the procedures are done in Maryland.
- Patients or their surviving family members will have little remedy or legal recourse other than through private civil legal action.

B. House Bill 812/Senate Bill 786 (Chapter 249, 2023)

In summary, these bills as enacted into law, shield abortion providers by allowing them to evade medical records documentation requirements related to abortion procedures and any resulting injury or complication. Though enacted in the name of women's privacy, this only serves to shield abortion providers from liability when a woman faces complications as a result of her abortion. Abortionists regularly redact personally identifying patient information when they submit abortion records to the state for Medicaid reimbursement.

- Withholding medical histories can prevent emergency medical providers from addressing abortion complications to avoid further injury or death of patients.
- Failure to record abortion procedures could prevent future reproductive health providers from appropriately treating conditions directly caused by a past abortion such as compromised cervix to ensure healthy future pregnancies.
- In cases of suspected abuse or sex-trafficking, healthcare providers are required to be Mandatory Reporters. Because of the failure of the state to require abortion reporting, abortionists are enabled to evade responsibility to protect women and children and to aid and abet predators by not reporting abortions committed on victims and allowing the abuse to continue.

Solutions

- The legislature must reaffirm abortionists' status as Mandatory Reporters.

¹⁰ <https://www.globalcenturion.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/The-Health-Consequences-of-Sex-Trafficking.pdf>

- The state should ensure proper signage, intake and resources in abortion facilities to protect against coercion and sex-trafficking (DHS has developed a sex trafficking intake form).
- The legislature must ensure proper oversight of abortion practices and require a full reporting of disciplinary actions taken by the Maryland Department of Health, Maryland Board of Physicians, the Maryland Board of Nursing and Maryland State Police.

Conclusions

Abortion shield laws allow abortion providers to evade liability for their patients' injuries and to ignore Mandatory Reporter duties, enabling sex traffickers and other abusers to continue to abuse their victims. The state must ensure that abortion providers provide complete medical records and histories for their patients while preserving patient privacy. By putting abortion procedures on record, doctors and law enforcement can better care for women in crisis.

III. Protecting Pregnant and Parenting Students on Campus

Becoming pregnant as a student can present a young woman with numerous challenges and pressures. 3 out of 4 women in society at large report coercion as a factor in their abortion decision, and a pregnant student on campus is subject to countless social pressures to abort, including professors, coaches, health workers, peers and boyfriends. As of 2023, a new law in Maryland is making it even more difficult for women to choose parenting on campus.

Need for Oversight

A. House Bill 477/Senate Bill 341 (Chapter 251, 2023)

- This legislation directs taxpayer funding to promote and expand abortion services on college campuses.
- The bill does not likewise promote alternative resources such as parenting accommodations in violation of federal Title IX. (An amendment to include life-friendly alternatives was rejected by the bill sponsor.)
- There are no legislative guardrails in place for pregnant students under the age of 18 as girls over 16 do not require parental notification or consent to obtain an abortion. Under existing state law, parents who are denied the right to consent to their college student's abortion, nonetheless are responsible for any medical bills arising from abortion complications.

Solutions

- The legislature should work to end all taxpayer subsidies for abortion on campus at both the college level and k-12 schools. At minimum the legislature must amend Education Article Section 15-136 (A)-(C) created by House Bill 477 (2023), to require equal funding and accommodation for pregnancy support and childbirth, to be in compliance with federal Title IX.
- Budget appropriations should be conditional on the state providing students equal information and access to pregnancy support services.
- Legislation should prevent the use of tuition fees for abortion promotion or reimbursement.
- In order to protect against coercion, universities and colleges must be required to bring more awareness to the rights of pregnant students on campus, including the right to pregnancy accommodation and the prohibition on any revocation of scholarship, placement or opportunity.
- Universities and colleges need to better promote and expand access to parenting resources to ensure that students are aware of all their options in order to make an informed decision.

Conclusion

Pregnant students should not be forced to choose between their studies and the life of their children. Young women experiencing unplanned pregnancy are particularly vulnerable to abortion coercion on campus. True consent requires a thorough examination of all the available options. By denying pregnant students equal access to lifesaving alternatives to abortion, the state is actively engaging in abortion coercion. The state has a duty to ensure that every state-funded university or college consistently provides all students information and access to pregnancy support services and prenatal care options to ensure that no one is pressured into an abortion on a Maryland college campus. Federal Title IX prohibits any institution that receives federal funding from discriminating on the basis of pregnancy. *However, the state should be careful to implement state policies to protect the rights of pregnant students, without codifying or promoting federal Title IX which requires equal accommodation for abortion.*

IV. Regulatory Restrictions on the Commercial Use of Fetal Human Remains

Maryland law calls for the humane disposal of human remains including fetal human remains, except in the case of aborted human beings.¹¹ Federal biomedical research labs located in Maryland routinely procure aborted fetal human tissue for inhumane and macabre experimentation, inflating the demand for aborted baby body parts.

While the federal government and many states, have laws prohibiting the sale and purchase of fetal human remains, there is no federal or state law requiring the dignified treatment of aborted fetal human remains. As a result, reports abound of aborted babies being found discarded in dumpsters, in landfills, and even flushed down toilets. But the most egregious affront to human dignity is the commercial use of aborted babies.

In 2022, Progressive Anti-Abortion Uprising (PAAU) discovered that Baltimore's Curtis Bay Energy facility entered a contract with Washington Surgi Center abortion mill in Washington D.C. to dispose of the bodily remains from aborted fetal human beings, burning them for electricity at their Baltimore County plant.¹² While the facility was not inspected related to this discovery, they were fined more than \$2 million for failure to fully incinerate medical waste and contaminating public landfills in Baltimore.

Need for Oversight

- Abortionists inhumanely profit from the use of fetal human remains without regulatory oversight or enforcement.
- Research and commercial use of aborted fetal human remains increases the demand for late term abortion and fully-developed, intact human fetuses.
- Maryland law protects animals from abuse in cosmetic research, but specifically excludes *homo sapiens* from the list of protected "animals".
- Fetal human remains should not be treated as medical or household waste, but provided dignified final disposition through burial or cremation.
- No inspection has been conducted of Curtis Bay Energy's collection and incineration of aborted fetal human remains as medical waste.
- Maryland law requires medical waste incinerators to be inspected quarterly.
- The proliferation of chemical abortion drugs resulting in fetal remains being flushed down toilets into public sewer systems, presents an elevated risk of cross-contamination of abortion

¹¹ Md. Code Ann., Health-Gen. Section 4-215.

¹² Medical Waste Company Accused of Burning Aborted Babies for Electricity - LifeNews.com.pdf

drugs in public water systems that could endanger healthy pregnancies for unknowing Maryland women and have other negative environmental impacts.

Solutions

- The legislature should fully defund human embryonic and fetal cell or tissue research, which has been proven an ineffective research method.
- Abortionists should not be permitted to make a profit off killing and the procurement of aborted fetal human remains for commercial or biomedical research purposes. Even nominal charges for preservation of aborted human “specimens” can have a significant cumulative financial value prohibited by federal law.
- Abortionists should be required to humanely dispose of fetal human remains through cremation or burial. No fetal remains should be disposed of in public landfills or water systems.
- The parent should have the right to determine the method of humane disposal of the child’s remains whether resulting from miscarriage or abortion, including through burial or cremation.

Conclusion

Maryland law should ensure the dignity of all human life through the humane disposal of aborted fetal human remains. Humane disposal contributes to the public health and safety and prevents the abortion industry from contaminating public water systems and landfills with the improper disposal of fetal remains.

V. State Safe Haven Program

Mothers in Maryland who choose to carry to term but not to parent also deserve security for the choice that they make. In 2002, the legislature established a “Baby Moses” law that allows women to anonymously surrender their children at specified police departments and hospitals within the first ten days after birth without threat of prosecution.¹³ Unfortunately, the state has failed to effectively implement or promote this program, despite receiving an annual budget appropriation for this purpose and babies continue to be needlessly abandoned and left to die in our state.

¹³ Md. Code Ann., Cts & Jud.Proc. Article, Section 5-641.

Need for Oversight

- In 2020, the body of a deceased 33-week gestation baby was discovered discarded in a restaurant bathroom in Upper Marlboro. In 2021, a baby was safely recovered by a private citizen after being abandoned in the woods in Glen Burnie.
- The Maryland Department of Human Services is currently the managing department for this program, but no public official is currently taking responsibility for the program.
- There are currently only 48 locations listed as approved to accept infants through the program, but many providers are not aware of the program and have not been trained. Current providers do not advertise the program on their individual websites. Some listed providers have even turned women away with no support.
- The official DHS brochure for the program has not been updated since 2005. The link provided to DHS resources only leads to the DHS homepage and not specific Safe Haven Resources.

Solutions

- Public funding already poured into this program should be better utilized by promoting the program through brochures and advertising in every public health institution and public high school. Public Service Announcements should be broadcasted routinely through state and local broadcasting programs. Billboards should be posted in strategic locations, particularly near urban centers where women are most targeted by abortion businesses.
- Safe Haven Providers need to be informed of their status and responsibilities and should advertise the program as one of their services with proper signage (provided by the National Safe Haven Alliance).
- Training should be administered to all providers by DHS or MDH with guidance from the National Safe Haven Alliance.
- Professional Fire Stations should be included as Safe Haven Providers to ensure a greater number of close and available locations for mothers in distress.
- The period for surrender should be extended from ten to 30 days, as recommended in model legislation of the National Safe Haven Alliance.
- The legislature should consider introducing legislation to amend the current code and allow the use of Safe Haven Baby boxes to be installed in the facilities of approved providers.

Safe Haven Boxes

- Safe Haven baby boxes are a successful innovation to infant surrender programs that Maryland should not ignore.

- These boxes are climate controlled and placed obviously along the provider building's exterior. Once the door is shut, an alarm immediately triggers for first responders to give the infant medical attention
- Safe Haven boxes ensure anonymity of the person surrendering an infant which can provide more peace of mind and a distressing situation.
- Since 2017, more than 30 infants have been saved by safe haven boxes. Since Indiana installed its first box in 2016, no infants have died in that state due to abandonment.

Conclusion

The Maryland General Assembly established a Safe Haven Program by law, intended to ensure the safety of abandoned infants in the state. However the program has been ignored and underutilized and babies continue to be abandoned and die from neglect. Without oversight and awareness, public funds remain unaccounted for which are desperately needed for the Safe Haven program. Expanding training and methods of surrender, including Safe Haven Baby boxes will help Safe Haven providers to offer the best service and mothers to feel more confident and informed in their choice.

VI. Protecting Pro-Life Speech and Action

Surrounding the Supreme Court's overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, we have witnessed an escalation of violence by abortion extremists against pro-life citizens, organizations and public officials. The pro-abortion culture promotes violence as a solution to unplanned pregnancies as well as to intimidate and harass those with opposing viewpoints. In fact, during a July 12, 2023 Congressional hearing, **FBI Director Christopher Wray** testified that 70% of violent incidents reported since the *Dobbs* decision had been committed by pro-abortionist activists against pro-life citizens and organizations.¹⁴

Even before the June 24, 2022 *Dobbs* decision was released, abortion terrorist organization "Ruth Sent Us" organized illegal protests outside the homes of Supreme Court justices, and called on its extremist supporters to storm Catholic churches during Mass. These abortion extremists ruthlessly harassed pro-life **Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh** and his family outside of their Montgomery County, Maryland home. The illegal stalking and harassment lasted over a month, with acquiescence by the U.S. Department of Justice, Maryland State Police and Montgomery County Police. The frightening events culminated with the June 8th attempt against the life of Justice Kavanaugh, by an abortion activist armed with a gun and a knife.

¹⁴ <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/watch-live-fbi-director-wray-testifies-to-house-judiciary-committee>

Militant pro-abortion terrorist groups including “Ruth Sent Us” and “Jane’s Revenge” promised a “**Summer of Rage**” following the *Dobb*’s decision and have taken credit for threats and acts of vandalism against pro-life pregnancy resource centers (PRCs) across the nation.¹⁵ More than 130 acts of violence or vandalism have been committed across the country by pro-abortion extremists but only 5 arrests have been made nationwide.

Attorney General Anthony Brown, Maryland State Police and local law enforcement agencies have demonstrated little interest in solving crimes against pro-life citizens despite the evidence. Instead, pro-life citizens in Maryland report that law enforcement agencies, weaponized by pro-abortion politicians, often attempt to intimidate and restrict pro-life speech and action despite the fact that pro-life speech is protected speech.

Need for Oversight

- At least two PRC’s in Maryland reported acts of vandalism against them which resulted in property damage, including a center in **Frederick** and another in **Hagerstown**. Maryland State Police under the previous administration issued advisories to local law enforcement agencies to increase patrols around PRC’s, but disingenuously issued the warning against “threats from either side”, to falsely implicate peaceful pro-lifers in the escalating violence.
- A violent assault occurred May 26th against two senior pro-life citizens praying peacefully outside of the Planned Parenthood abortion mill on North Howard Street in **Baltimore City**. The unprovoked attack left one of the men severely injured with multiple fractured bones and potential blindness in one eye. Despite the fact that a video was secured with a clear view of the assailant and that the assailant was engaged in conversation with clinic employees, Baltimore City police have failed to issue an arrest in the case.
- A violent assault occurred July 8th against an 83-year-old pro-life woman who was prayerfully protesting outside a **Takoma Park** abortion clinic. During the brutal assault by a pro-abortion extremist, the elderly woman was repeatedly struck and sprayed with black spray paint. Despite the fact that photo evidence was secured identifying the assailant, Montgomery County Police have made no arrests.
- On July 4th 2023, Baltimore County Right to Life (BCRTL) volunteers were harassed by **Baltimore County Police** who attempted to prevent the pro-life organization from marching in the Baltimore County 4th of July Parade, despite the fact that the organization had obtained a permit. Baltimore County Police removed the BCRTL volunteers from the parade line-up claiming that someone had made a police report accusing a volunteer of assault in an

¹⁵ <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-abortion-rights-activists-start-summer-rage-with-saturday-protests-2022-05-14/>

attempt to suppress pro-life speech and action. After parade officials insisted on the validity of the group's permit and their peaceful presence, the police were unable to prevent them from marching. Despite the intimidation and harassment by police, BCRTL's participation featuring positive pro-life messaging and patriotic musical performances, earned the group the Third Place Prize in the parade. BCRTL filed public information requests with Baltimore County Police to obtain information about the alleged assault report but have yet to receive a detailed response.

- On October 18th 2023, two senior citizens who were praying outside an abortion business in **Frederick County**, were assaulted by a known assailant, who approached them in her vehicle throwing coffee on the victims. The assailant has been positively identified but not yet prosecuted by the state.

Solutions

- Legislative leaders should call a high-level meeting with Governor Moore, Attorney General Anthony Brown, and the Superintendent of State Police to denounce the use of violence against pro-life organizations and volunteers and to formally restate the state's commitment to protecting free speech and religious liberty.
- The Superintendent of State Police should be tasked with developing a plan to discourage and respond to incidents of violence against pro-life citizens, churches, pregnancy resource centers and other pro-life organizations.
- The legislature should seek a report and full accounting from the State Police of the number of threats or incidents of violence reported and what measures are implemented to ensure public safety.
- The legislature should enact legislation to increase penalties for hate crimes, particularly acts of violence or vandalism committed upon a church or members of an organized religion.
- The legislature must continue to oppose legislation that may weaken the existing statute against Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPP) and ensure that faith-based and pro-life organizations and citizens receive the equal protection of the law related to freedom of speech and assembly.
- The legislature should work to ensure that faith-based organizations do not suffer disparate treatment by any office or agency of government, including the Governor's Office, Maryland General Assembly, Office of the Attorney General, State Comptroller's Office, Maryland Department of Health, Maryland Department of Education and Maryland Department of Commerce.

Conclusion

Pro-life speech and assembly are protected rights upon which the government shall not infringe. By failing to respond appropriately to threats and acts of violence against pro-life citizens and organizations by pro-abortion extremists, the state is constructively infringing on the rights of its citizens. Legislative Leaders must provide oversight of state departments and officials and condition budget appropriations on performance metrics. Legislative Leaders must advocate for the rights of their constituents and seek solutions in cooperation with the Executive Branch.

Report Summary

The Maryland General Assembly has the opportunity to make Maryland a safer environment for women and children alike, by providing vigilant oversight and accountability of Maryland reproductive health policies and programs. As abortion on demand is expanded, potentially by a November 2024 ballot amendment to the state Constitution, Maryland's commitment to providing women with a quality standard of medical care, informed consent and access to lifesaving alternatives to abortions must increase exponentially.

By providing legislative oversight of programs concerned with abortion regulation, reproductive health, human trafficking, parental rights and prenatal and parenting support, Maryland can become a state that provides real choice with safer options for any decision a mother makes. Without oversight, the number of abortion-related injuries and deaths will increase, government waste, fraud and abuse will go undetected, predatory abortion practices and coercion will be allowed to proliferate, and the public will be left confused about the services Maryland provides and where to receive quality care.

If women in our state are to have real choices, pro-life organizations and providers must be encouraged to practice and provide needed services without fear of legal or professional penalty. Pro-life speech and the right to peaceful assembly must be protected as fundamental freedoms upon which the government must not infringe- either through action *or* inaction. Legislative leaders must address and tighten House and Senate Rules that grant unchecked discretion to Committee Chairpersons to suppress pro-life bills in committees without floor votes in violation of citizens' rights to free speech, representation and equal protection. Republican lawmakers should passionately represent the pro-life platform of the Republican National Committee to create a more just and peaceful Maryland.