



**MDRTL State Legislative Advocacy
2024 Maryland General Assembly
“Legislative Wrap-Up”**

***Maryland Right to Life (MDRTL) has been the leading voice on pro-life policy in Maryland for more than 50 years. We mobilize policy campaigns and lobby on behalf of those whose lives are threatened and cannot defend themselves. With God’s grace and the help of our supporters and volunteers throughout the state, MDRTL identified and provided testimony against 86 legislative threats to life, successfully defeated 53 bills and sent 51,000 constituent letters supporting the right to life during the 2024 state legislative session.
Thank you for your amazing support!***

LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS - On April 8, 2024 the 446th session of the Maryland General Assembly came to a close. In all, MDRTL reviewed and **analyzed 2,714** pieces of legislation and 14 resolutions during the ninety-day session. MDRTL successfully **defeated 53 bills** that threatened life and **supported 15 bills** that promoted the dignity of human life.

The Maryland General Assembly continues to help the abortion industry expand their reach and increase their profits. With the backing of Governor Wes Moore, an ambitious abortion activist, democrat lawmakers vowed to enact a package of bills to make Maryland a sanctuary state for abortionists and those who engage in the interstate trafficking of women and drugs for abortion purposes.

Pro-abortion legislators continue to hold a veto-proof majority and easily pass bills to increase public funding of abortion and expand abortion access. Abortion profits increase as the standard of medical care decreases, allowing less qualified and less educated individuals to provide chemical and surgical abortions. The result of these extreme legislative actions is the reduced health and safety for women and girls in our state.

Despite significant disadvantages, MDRTL’s lobbying efforts earned a success rate of 61%. MDRTL also secured legislative sponsors for the introduction of critical pro-life bills, including the ***Maryland Safe Haven Program*** expansion bill (Senator Mike McKay & Delegates William Wivel and William Valentine) which was **enacted into law April 25th** and the ***Protecting Women Against Coercive Abuse and Human Trafficking*** act (Senator Marybeth Carozza & Delegate April Miller) to protect the rights of mothers to choose life for their children. We are grateful to the brave pro-life leaders who sponsored these important bills.

MDRTL 2024 SESSION SUMMARY:

PRO-LIFE WIN! Assisted Suicide – DEFEATED. HB403/SB443 – *End of Life Option Act* – sponsored by Delegate Terri Hill (D- District 12A) and Senator Jeffrey Waldstreicher (D-Montgomery). MDRTL utilized strategic partnerships to successfully defeat passage of the Assisted Suicide/euthanasia bill for the 6th time in last 9 years. Working with coalition partners, MDRTL supporters lobbied legislators, helping to firm up bill opposition. MDRTL recruited expert legal support to facilitate training sessions for state lawmakers in preparation for vigorous committee debate. We are especially grateful to Senator Mike McKay (R-Allegany, Garrett and Washington Counties) who led Senate opposition efforts and successfully negotiated key votes. MDRTL will continue to lead efforts to defend the medically vulnerable, elderly, underinsured and those living with disabilities against the threat of euthanasia, both voluntary and involuntary.

PRO-LIFE WIN! Maryland Safe Haven Program Expansion - ENACTED. SB873/HB1323 - *Immunity from Liability- Maryland Safe Haven Program* – sponsored by Senator Mike McKay (R-Allegany, Garrett and Washington Counties), Delegate William Wivell and Delegate William Valentine (Rs-Washington County). The bill makes Maryland's Safe Haven law one of the strongest in the nation, expanding the period to 60 days, during which a mother who cannot care for her newborn, may safely relinquish her infant to a designated facility. The law will make Maryland the 19th state in the nation to authorize facilities to use baby box devices to enhance maternal privacy and accessibility. Safe Haven laws have proven to be an effective solution for preventing the wrongful and illegal harm or death of newborn infants. The newly signed law will enable the state to better serve the needs of vulnerable infants and mothers in crisis.

PRO-LIFE WIN! State EMTALA codification - DEFEATED. SB 1175 - *The Maryland Lifesaving Treatment Access and Abortion Protection Act* – sponsored by Senator Clarence Lam (D- Anne Arundel, Baltimore & Howard Counties). This law attempted to apply to elective abortion procedures, the federal Emergency Medical Treatment & Labor Act (EMTALA) enacted by Congress in 1986 to ensure public access to emergency services regardless of ability to pay. The bill would have required hospital emergency room providers to provide or complete elective abortions, regardless of whether the hospital or provider had conscientious objections.

PRO-LIFE WIN! Sex Education Framework- DEFEATED. HB558 - *Comprehensive Health Education Framework* – sponsored by Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary (D-Howard). MDRTL was one of few organizations to oppose this bill that would have mandated on all county school systems, a radical sexuality curriculum for elementary school-aged children, including medically inaccurate content on human reproduction and inappropriate graphic descriptions of sexual acts. MDRTL defended the rights of parents to protect their children from predatory practices within our schools.

PRO-LIFE WIN! Attack on Pro-Life Speech and Action - DEFEATED. HB330/SB568 - *Courts – Civil Actions – Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation* – sponsored by Delegate Sandy Rosenberg (D-Baltimore City) and Senator Shelly Hettleman (D-Baltimore County). MDRTL has defeated this bill four times in four years that would have allowed media corporations and others to target pro-life speech through frivolous litigation.

PRO-LIFE WIN! Interstate Abortion – DEFEATED. HB425/SB359 - *Advance Practice Registered Nurse Compact* – sponsored by Delegate Sandy Rosenberg (D-Baltimore City) and Senator Antonio Hayes (D-Baltimore City). MDRTL defeated this bill for the third time in three years. The bill would have allowed nurses bound by compact to provide interstate surgical or chemical abortions without licensure by the state where the abortion occurs.

PRO-LIFE WIN! Abortion Peer Pressure – DEFEATED. HB74 - *Lifesaver Schools Program* – sponsored by Delegate Michelle Guyton (D-Baltimore & Carroll Counties). This public high school program would have used taxpayer funding to train teens to counsel fellow teens about pregnancy and abortion and included referring minor girls to Planned Parenthood or other abortion providers.

PRO-LIFE LOSS. ERA Resolution – PASSED. SJ001/HJ001 – *Affirming the Federal Equal Rights Amendment* – sponsored by Senator Ariana Kelly (D-Montgomery County) and Delegate Edith Patterson (D-Charles County). This resolution, which does not have the force of law, urges the federal government to force the failed Equal Rights Amendment of 1972 into the Constitution of the United States despite the fact that the states refused to ratify the measure. Federal court precedent over the past forty years has universally held the amendment cannot be revived. If imposed by executive or judicial dictate, the ERA could be employed as the legal foundation to challenge any state or federal limits on abortion, and to require taxpayer funding of elective abortions at all levels of government.

PRO-LIFE LOSS. Abortion Facility Security Grants – ENACTED. SB975/HB1091 –*Reproductive Health Care Clinic Security Grant Program* – sponsored by Senator Sarah Elfreth (D- Anne Arundel County). Activist legislators were determined to provide additional funding to the abortion industry in the form of grants for abortion facility security improvements, despite the fact that proponents failed to provide evidence of violence against abortion facilities in Maryland. MDRTL presented witnesses to firmly establish that the state-specific evidence demonstrates an escalation in violence against pro-life centers and citizens since the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, and cited the 2022 Congressional testimony of FBI Director Christopher Wray, who reported that roughly 70% of the incidence of violence or threats of violence his office was investigating was committed by pro-abortion assailants against pro-life victims.

MDRTL 2024 ELECTION ALERT:

PRO-LIFE ALERT ! Abortion+ Amendment Ballot Question- November 2024 General Election. HB 705/SB798 (2023) *Declaration of Rights - Right to Reproductive Liberty* –House Speaker Adrienne Jones (D-Baltimore) and Senate President Bill Ferguson (D-Baltimore City). During the 2023 session, democrat lawmakers made it their top priority to enact this bill to create a fundamental right to abortion in the Constitution of the State of Maryland. MDRTL successfully defeated three prior attempts to create a state constitutional right to abortion.

The law authorized a ballot question in the November 2024 General Election, asking voters to amend the state Constitution. While “reproductive freedom” is not defined in state statute, there is no question that such an amendment would prohibit health and safety regulations of abortion practices, including late –term and partial birth abortions. If ratified, the state Constitution can be weaponized against pro-life citizens, churches, organizations and pro-life pregnancy resource centers – threatening the existence of and access to lifesaving alternatives to abortion in Maryland.

The so-called “**Reproductive Freedom**” amendment is a “Trojan horse” that uses abortion rights as an inducement for Marylanders to unwittingly vote away their parental rights. Abortion already is legal under Maryland statute for any reason through birth. Bill sponsors revealed their true intentions through testimony that the amendment would create *new rights beyond abortion*, including for minor children to obtain gender transition drugs and procedures without parental consent, using taxpayer funds. Amendments to add parental consent requirements to the bill were rejected. The Reproductive Freedom amendment would eliminate parental rights to make critical medical decisions for their children and threaten parental custody rights, as similar policies already have done in other states.

It will take the full strength of a united pro-life community in Maryland to defeat this dangerous amendment and protect Maryland children and families. For that purpose, MDRTL has joined the **Health Not Harm MD** Coalition to raise public awareness and get out the vote in November 2024.

To learn more about coalition efforts and how you can help, visit www.HealthNotHarmMD.org

(By authority of Health Not Harm MD Ballot Issue Committee, Anne Fox, Treasurer.)

**For additional information about Maryland Right to Life, and to support our ministry
please visit www.mdrtl.org.**

(By authority of Maryland Right to Life, Sallie Taylor, Treasurer.)

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