

2025



# Legislative Session Report

## *on Women's Issues*

Maryland Commission for Women



[www.marylandwomen.org](http://www.marylandwomen.org)

## Maryland Commission for Women

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## About This Report

The 2025 Maryland legislative session is the beginning of a new era for the Maryland Commission for Women. In addition to supporting our legislative agenda, the Commission for Women Policy Committee focused on monitoring the progress of a wide range of women's issues in the state. This report is the result of our work throughout the session. We hope that this report will serve as a resource for the advocates, service providers, and researchers who work on a wide range of women's rights issues year-round.

The Maryland Commission for Women serves as a clearinghouse for women's work issues across the state. Established through an Executive Order in 1965, the Commission was made permanent by the legislature in 1972. Our 25 Commissioners are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Maryland Senate. Half of our Commissioners are nominated by women's organizations across the state, ensuring we work collaboratively with community groups.

In addition to serving as a clearinghouse on women's issues, the Commission is statutorily required to direct attention to critical problems facing Maryland women and recommend ways to combat discrimination and support economic opportunity for women. The Maryland Commission for Women identified three broad issue areas to focus on throughout the years 2025 and 2026. Our 2025 policy agenda largely mirrors these priorities.

## Maryland Commission for Women's 2025 Priority Issue Areas

### Women's Health

Health Equity & Healthcare Access  
Maternal & Child Health  
Intimate Partner & Sexual Violence  
Reproductive Rights & Justice

### Women in the Workforce

Gender Based Occupational Segregation  
Justice Impacted Women and Re-Entry  
Pay Equity & Economic Equality  
Workplace Discrimination  
Women in Elected Office

### The Care Economy

Caregiving and Long-Term Care  
Child Care Access & Affordability  
Family & Medical Leave


**T**his report is a summary of the legislation the Commission for Women tracked during the 2025 legislative session. It includes our legislative priorities, and the priorities of the major women's issues coalitions in Maryland: Women Legislators of Maryland, Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW), Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV), Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA), and the Reproductive Justice Coalition anchored by RJ Maryland and the Maryland Women's Law Center.

In addition to legislation supported by Maryland's women's rights groups, this report also includes other legislation that impacts women and may be of interest to researchers, elected officials, or advocates working to advance women's rights in Maryland. The report also includes important dates and report deadlines for the legislation highlighted. Unsuccessful legislation included in the "Bills to Watch for Next Year" sections has either passed both legislative chambers in a different posture, passed in one chamber, or has already been identified as a priority by a women's rights group for resubmission next year.

This report acknowledges dozens of victories, large and small, for Maryland women. Thank you to all of the organizations and individuals who made this progress for Maryland's women possible.



Ariana Kelly, Executive Director



Dr. LaShaune Stitt, Chair

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## WOMEN'S HEALTH

### Healthcare Access & Health Equity

#### HB297 and SB5 - Maryland Health Benefit Exchange

State-Based Young Adult Health Insurance Subsidies Pilot Program - Sunset Repeal

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgaweb/site/Legislation/Details/HB0297>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Kenneth Kerr and Senator Clarence K. Lam

Women's Caucus Priority

MLAW priority

Makes permanent the young adult health insurance subsidies pilot program. This program disproportionately benefits young women. As of September 2024, about 29,156 young women received federal subsidies compared with 21,340 young men. The majority of these individuals also received the Maryland young adult subsidy. This program has been highly effective in helping young women gain, keep, and improve their health coverage.

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#### HB783 and SB458 Health Occupations

Implicit Bias and Structural Racism Training

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgaweb/site/Legislation/Details/HB0783>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk and Senator Dawn Gile

Maryland Nurses Association (MNA) has partnered with the University of Maryland School of Nursing's DEI Department to develop a web-based training program focused on systemic racism. This initiative is funded by an American Nurses Association grant and will be made available at no cost to healthcare professionals and organizations across Maryland. Healthcare organizations will have the flexibility to integrate the required training into their competency programs as they see fit. According to the Maryland Nursing Workforce Center, the nursing profession in Maryland is 89% women. The National Institute for Health estimates that nearly 80% of the total healthcare workforce is women.

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#### HB859 and SB611 - Health

Access to Health Insurance for Child Care Professionals

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgaweb/site/Legislation/Details/hb0859>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Jared Solomon and Senator Nancy J. King

Requires the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange to assess access to health care for early childhood educators through a survey, coordinated with the Department of Education, and focusing on providers who accept Child Care Scholarship vouchers. In addition, the law requires the Exchange to promote health insurance access for these educators by assisting them in identifying coverage through the exchange and by providing informational resources.



## Maternal & Child Health

### HB170 and SB213 - Health

Maternal and Child Health Population Health Improvement Fund - Use

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb0170>

**Sponsor:** Departmental Bill, Maryland Department of Health

Extends, from December 31, 2025, to December 31, 2027, the date through which the Fund may spend down its money. All funds must be used for maternal and child health population improvement activities and must be approved by the Health Services Cost Review Commission. This law simply extends the time during which the Fund may spend its money.

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### HB334 and SB156 - Public Health

Workgroup on Newborn Nurse Home Visiting Services - Establishment

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb0334>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Kenneth Kerr and Senator Karen Lewis Young

MLAW Priority

Establishes a Workgroup on Newborn Nurse Home Visiting Services, staffed by the Maryland Family Network in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Health. The workgroup will study current newborn home visiting programs in the state as compared to external data on jurisdictions with universal home visiting programs. The workgroup will then identify gaps, barriers, and needs that the state must address in order to implement a universal newborn home visiting program, and provide recommendations to address them.

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### HB838 and SB854 - Health Occupations

Licensed Direct-Entry Midwives - Revisions

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb0838>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Bonnie Cullison and Senator Karen Lewis Young

Extends elements of the legislation governing direct-entry midwives (LDEMs) for another 5 years and adds to the scope of practice of LDEMs. The bill broadens the types of patients LDEMs may care for to include those outside a “normal” body mass index, those experiencing anemia, and those impacted by congenital anomalies that do not increase the pregnancy’s risk. It also clarifies certain processes for LDEMs and their licensing board.

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### HB1251 – Hospitals and Medical Professional Liability Insurers

Doula and the Birth Policy Transparency Act

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB1251>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Karen Toles

Women’s Caucus Priority

This bill requires the development of maternal health policies in hospitals related to doula access and informed consent for interventions like c-sections and medical induction. It also requires clarity for transfer policies for hospitals receiving patients from a homebirth or out-of-institution setting. Each hospital must provide MDH policies by January 1, 2026. MDH must make the policies provided by a hospital available to the public.

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### **HB1380 and SB676 - Health Care Facilities**

Hospitals and Freestanding Birthing Centers - Perinatal Care Standards

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb1380>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk and Senator Dawn Gile

Requires the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), in coordination with the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS), to adopt regulations establishing minimum perinatal (labor and delivery and newborn) care standards that meet or exceed the Maryland Perinatal System Standards. MDH must adopt the regulations by October 1, 2026.

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## **Preventing Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence**

### **HB1 and SB7 – Department of Transportation**

See Someone, Save Someone Act

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB0001?ys=2025RS>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Eric Ebersole and Senator Michael A. Jackson

Baltimore County Commission for Women Priority  
Women's Caucus Support

Requires the Maryland Department of Transportation to develop and implement training on identifying and reporting suspected human trafficking. Requires transportation sector state employees and contractors to certify completion of this training.

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### **HB236 and SB92 – Peace Orders and Criminal Harassment**

Intentional Visual Surveillance

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb0236>

**Sponsor:** Delegate William Valentine and Senator Paul D. Corderman

Expands the definition of criminal harassment to include surveillance of a residence where privacy is expected. Enhances peace orders to stop the misuse of surveillance tools. Institutes criminal penalties for those found guilty of such intentional surveillance. This bill helps stalking victims and others experiencing harassment through surveillance.

## HB675 and SB669 – Public Safety - Rape Kit Testing - Tracking Program and Grant Fund

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb0675>

**Sponsor:** Delegate J. Sandy Bartlett and Senator Shelly Hettleman

MCASA Priority

Makes changes to the Rape Kit Testing Grant Fund and the Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kit Tracking Program. This legislation expands the grant program to be used to support the office of the Attorney General in assisting law enforcement agencies. It also allows the grant program to be used to fund telehealth programs and advocacy, support, and informational programs run by MCASA, the state sexual assault coalition. The bill also extends the deadline, from December 31, 2025, to March 31, 2026, for a law enforcement agency or a person, including a health care provider, forensic laboratory, or State's Attorney, to submit information related to sexual assault evidence collection kits to the tracking program.

## HB1547 – Barbers and Cosmetologists – License Qualifications

Domestic Violence Awareness Training

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb1547>

**Sponsor:** House Speaker Adrienne A. Jones

Women's Caucus Priority  
MNADV Support

Mandates that, beginning October 1, 2025, applicants and renewing licensees in the barbering and cosmetology professions complete a one-hour domestic violence awareness training approved by the Maryland Department of Labor. The training, available both in-person and virtually, covers recognizing signs of domestic violence, effective communication with victims, and connecting clients to appropriate resources.

## SB360 – Revenge Porn - Definition of Visual Representation and Civil Action

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/sb0360>

**Sponsor:** Senator Katie Fry Hester

MCASA Priority

Defines the term “visual representation” as it relates to the crime of revenge porn; the definition now includes unaltered images as well as those created by artificial intelligence with or without the use of other depictions of the victim. The bill also creates the ability for a victim of revenge porn to bring civil action.

## Reproductive Rights & Justice

### HB930 and SB848 – Public Health

Public Health Abortion Grant Program

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgaweb/site/Legislation/Details/hb0930>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Lesley J. Lopez and Senator Guy Guzzone

Women's Caucus Priority  
MLAW Priority  
MCASA Priority  
MNADV Priority  
RJ Coalition Priority  
Maryland Commission for Women Priority

Establishes a grant program within MDH to support access to abortion services. The grant program is funded by a transfer of excess funds in segregated accounts held by Maryland insurance carriers. These funds have accumulated since the Affordable Care Act required insurance carriers to collect separate funds for abortion coverage. Most of these funds have gone unspent, resulting in an accumulation of over \$20 million. Under federal law, the funds can only be used to provide abortion care. Under the newly established grant program, the Maryland Insurance Administration (MIA) will order a transfer of a portion of the unused funds to the Public Health Abortion Grant Program. The Maryland Department of Health will then provide grants to organizations supporting equitable access to abortion in the state. The grants are to be used in cases where federal funding for abortion is prohibited, and the patient is uninsured, underinsured, or unable to use insurance due to domestic violence or other concerns about insurance carrier communication. Maryland is the first state in the nation to utilize these excess funds held by insurance carriers to increase equitable abortion access.

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### HB939 and SB674 – Maryland Commission for Women

Maryland Collaborative to Advance Implementation of Coverage of Over-the-Counter Birth Control

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgaweb/site/Legislation/Details/hb0939>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk and Senator Shelly Hettleman

Women's Caucus Priority  
Maryland Commission for Women Priority

This legislation directs the Maryland Commission for Women to develop and support a statewide collaborative to improve access to over-the-counter (OTC) contraceptives. The collaborative will bring together representatives of a number of different stakeholder organizations, including state agencies, professional associations, and women's rights organizations. The Collaborative members and Commission staff will review barriers to OTC contraceptive access, such as pharmacy and insurance infrastructure, and make recommendations to the state General Assembly for further policy action. Those recommendations will take the form of two reports, one due January 2026 and the other due December 2027.

**HB1045 and SB940 - Health**

Health Insurance, Family Planning Services, and Confidentiality of Medical Records - Consumer Protections - Updates

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb1045>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk and Senator Antonio Hayes

The bill modifies and strengthens the protections to family planning providers created in 2017 with the establishment of the Maryland Family Planning Program and in 2023 with the Reproductive Health Protection Act. It updates definitions to ensure that current family planning program providers maintain funding. It also establishes that the Insurance Commissioner and the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (MCCR) have concurrent jurisdiction to enforce consumer protection provisions related to discrimination in health insurance. The bill also alters the definitions of “legally protected health care” and “sensitive health services” to include gender-affirming care.

## WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE & SOCIETY

### Career Opportunities and Training

**HB19 and SB216 – Health Occupations**

Building Opportunities for Nurses Act

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB0019?ys=2025RS>

**Sponsor:** Departmental Bill, Maryland Department of Health

Expands loan forgiveness and educational pathways for nursing professionals. This legislation extends the termination date for the Maryland Board of Nursing (MBON) by five years to July 1, 2030, and extends the Secretary of Health’s authority over MBON’s infrastructure operations through June 30, 2030. The legislation also expands eligibility for the Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program (MLARP) for Nurses and Nursing Support Staff to additional nurses and nursing support staff with for-profit employment in an area of the State identified by MDH as having a health care workforce shortage or public health need and to individuals who practice a medical specialty that has been identified as being in shortage in the geographic area where the nurse practices.

**HB265 and SB456 – Dental Services**

Qualification for Maryland Dent-Care Program

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb0265>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Heather Bagnall and Senator Mike McKay

Makes part-time dentists and hygienists eligible for Higher Education Loan Assistance Grants under the Maryland Dent-Care Program. The Dent-Care Program provides loan repayment for dentists and dental hygienists serving at least 30% Medicaid patients. This legislation will allow part-time dental hygienists, who are 95% women, to pay off their student loans and achieve financial independence while pursuing careers serving high-need populations. All of Maryland’s other health occupations loan repayment programs already cover part-time workers.

### **HB345 and SB174 - Health Occupations**

Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB0345>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Kenneth Kerr and Senator Joanne C. Benson

This bill enters Maryland into the Interstate Social Work Compact. According to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), more than 80% of licensed social workers are women. This legislation will increase professional opportunities for social workers, allowing them to work across compact states without applying for additional licenses. Increasing professional license portability between states has also been identified as a critical issue for supporting military families in Maryland. It also increases women's economic mobility and may bring more social workers into the state.

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### **HB580 and SB164 – Terminology and Obsolete References**

Maryland State Firefighters Association and Related Terms

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb0580>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Thomas S. Hutchinson and Senator Cheryl C. Kagan

Maryland Commission for Women Priority

Update gendered statutory language to reflect inclusive terminology across the fire service sector. Officially renames in statute the Maryland State Firemen's Association to the Maryland State Firefighters' Association. This reflects the official rebranding that took place in 2024 after a multi-year campaign and successful vote of the membership to adopt inclusive language.

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### **HB840 and SB511 - Public Senior Higher Education Institutions**

Pregnant and Parenting Students

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb0840>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Aletheia McCaskill and Senator Shaneka Henson

Requires public four-year higher education institutions to adopt a plan regarding pregnant and parenting students that is consistent with Title IX. The plan must include adoption, referral, and referral to on-campus or off-campus services regarding the availability of government assistance programs and any other scholarships or subsidies, and availability of institutional accommodations and a referral network of health care service providers. The bill also requires institutions to post their plans on their websites by August 1, 2026.

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## **Courts, Child Custody & Child Support**

### **HB261 and SB110 - Estates and Trusts**

Priority of Claims on an Estate - Unpaid Child Support

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb0261>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Catherine M. Forbes and Senator Chris West



Prioritizes the payment of child support in cases where a parent dies and their assets are insufficient to cover all of their debts. Under the previous law, child support was at the bottom of this list of priority payments. This law ensures that minor children likely receive some of the money due to them at the time of their parents' death.

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### HB275 - Family Law

Child Support - Multifamily Adjustment

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb0275>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Charlotte Crutchfield

Revises child support calculations to include a deduction for children in the paying parent's home who are not part of a support order but whom that parent is supporting financially. In the past, only those children who were part of a child support order would be considered when the court was setting child support amounts.

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### HB681 and SB15 - Child Support

Driver's License Suspension for Arrearages and Court Orders

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb0681>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Karen Toles and Senator Ron Watson

Excludes non-custodial parents with incomes under 250% of the federal poverty level from license suspensions when their child support payments are in arrears.

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### HB881 and SB703

Family Investment Program - Child Support

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb0881>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Emily Shetty and Senator Cory V. McCray

Beginning in FY2028, this legislation phases in a passthrough system for recipients of both child support payments and Temporary Cash Assistance from the state. Under current law, the state retains most child support payments for these recipients to offset the cost of the cash assistance program. This new law will phase in a system over four years that allows low-income families to receive both their full child support amounts and the same level of cash assistance they already receive from the state.

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### HB1191 and SB548 - Family Law

Child Custody - Determinations

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb1191>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Susan K. McComas and Senator Mary-Dulany James

MCASA Support  
MNADV Support

Authorizes the courts to consider a number of different factors in determining the best interest of a child in custody cases. These factors expand beyond abuse and criminal convictions of a parent to encompass all of the family dynamics that impact a child's

life. This includes whether and how parents will share the rights and responsibilities of raising the child, the child's physical and emotional security, protection from exposure to conflict and violence, developmental needs, the daily needs of the child, and the parents' relationship with each other.

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### **HB1440 – Courts**

Parental Accommodations

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb1440>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Robbyn Lewis

Allows an excuse from jury service for an individual who is breastfeeding or has legal custody of a child younger than age three. The bill also requires a circuit courthouse that is constructed or undergoes a major renovation project on or after October 1, 2025, to maintain on its premises a private lactation room meeting certain requirements that may be used by employees of the court and members of the public to nurse and express breast milk.

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## **Economic Equality**

### **HB500 and SB426 - Procurement Reform Act of 2025**

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb0500>

**Sponsor:** Administration Bill

Modernizes Maryland's procurement system while expanding economic opportunities for women-owned businesses. The bill strengthens the role of the Office of Small, Minority, and Women Business Affairs, increases access to state contracts through the expanded Small Business Reserve (SBR) and Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) programs, and shortens vendor payment times. It also requires diversity plans in hiring and subcontracting, encourages good labor practices, and supports inclusive participation in procurement. These reforms promote greater equity and help ensure women entrepreneurs can more fully engage in and benefit from state contracting.

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### **HB1018 and SB689 - Financial Institutions**

Conventional Home Mortgage Loans - Assumption and Required Disclosures

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB1018?ys=2025RS>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Andrew C. Pruski and Senator Dawn Gile

Allows a qualifying spouse going through a divorce to assume the family's existing mortgage, rather than being forced to refinance into a higher interest rate. Requires banking institutions, credit unions, and mortgage lenders to include a provision in certain conventional home mortgage loans that allows any existing borrower, in the event of a divorce, to purchase the property interest of other borrowers on the loan by assuming the seller's portion of the mortgage if the purchaser qualifies for the loan.

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### **HB1253 - State Government**

Department of Social and Economic Mobility

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb1253>

**Sponsor:** House Speaker Adrienne A. Jones

Establishes the Department of Social and Economic Mobility (DoSEM) as a principal department in the Executive Branch. The head of DoSEM is the Secretary of Social and Economic Mobility, who is appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. DoSEM consists of three units (corresponding to the three offices transferred to the new department under the bill): the Office of Minority Business Enterprises (still referred to as OMBE) from the Maryland Department of Transportation; the Governor's Office of Small, Minority, and Women Business Affairs (GOSBA); and the Office of Social Equity (OSE) in the Maryland Cannabis Administration (MCA); and the Office of Minority Business Enterprises (OMBE) in the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT); DoSEM is the successor to all three of those offices. This new department will help to highlight women-owned businesses, especially those owned by women of color.

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### **HB1483 and SB923 - Public Schools**

High School Sports Officials - Payment and Fees

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB1483?ys=2025RS>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Dana Jones and Senator Dawn Gile

Requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), in consultation with Maryland Public Secondary School Athletic Association (MPSSAA) to develop a list of similar high school sports for boys and girls, by considering whether the sports occur in the same season, have comparable rules, require a similar number of officials, require similar officiating services, and feature competition of comparable lengths of time. Each county board must ensure that sports officials providing similar officiating services for sports categorized as similar receive the same pay. Additionally, county boards are required to reject a bid for a proposal or a procurement contract that would result in different pay or fees for officials offering similar officiating services in similar sports. This legislation promotes equal pay regardless of the gender of the official or the players, supporting gender equity.

## **CARE ECONOMY**

### **Child Care**

**HB185 and SB359 Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program**

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB0185>

**Sponsors:** Delegate Bernice Mireku-North And Senator Nancy J. King

The Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program within MSDE provides grants to child care providers that provide specialized child care and early education to children younger than age six who have developmental delays, physical disabilities, or delays in social, emotional, or behavioral functioning. This bill reestablishes a mandated appropriation for the program, administered by MSDE. As a result, the Governor must include a \$3.7 million appropriation for the program in the annual budget bill from fiscal 2027 through 2029.

### **HB389 and SB516 - Property Tax**

Day Care Centers, Child Care Homes, and Child Care Centers

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB0389>

**Sponsors:** Delegate Julie Palakovich Carr and Senator Nancy J. King

Women's Caucus Priority

Exempts personal property used in connection with certain large family child care homes from valuation and taxation. Also authorizes the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore City or County, or municipal leaders, to grant a property tax credit against the real property tax owed on the portion of real property used for certain large family child care homes.

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### **HB477 - State Department of Education**

Family Child Care Homes and Child Care Centers - Regulatory Analysis

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb0477>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Ben Barnes and Delegate Aletheia McCaskill

Women's Caucus Priority

Maryland State Department of Education will conduct an analysis of existing regulations relating to child care and will submit an interim report by January 1, 2026, and a final report by September 1, 2026. In conducting the analysis, MSDE will analyze the current regulatory framework governing staffing, the physical requirements, and the programs in place to support child care facilities. MSDE will examine the regulatory frameworks in different states and regions as compared to Maryland and consult with stakeholders, including the Office of Child Care Advisory Council, State and local early childhood advisory councils, private child care providers, and nonprofit organizations and unions that represent child care providers.

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### **HB785 - Common Ownership Communities and Zoning Authorities**

Operation of Family Child Care Homes - Limitations

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB0785>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Jessica Feldmark

Women's Caucus Priority

This bill prevents a cooperative housing corporation, condominium, or homeowners association (HOA) from restricting the establishment and operation of a family child care home. This includes the use of the roads, sidewalks, and other common elements of the communities by users of the family child care home. The bill also prevents any limits on the number of children cared for by a family child care home beyond the state standards.

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### **HB1121 and SB687 - Child Care Scholarship Program**

Youth Transitioning From Foster Placement to Successful Adulthood Program - Establishment

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB1121>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Emily Shetty and Senator Joanne C. Benson

This bill establishes the Youth Transitioning From Foster Placement to Successful Adulthood Program, administered by the Maryland State Department of Education. The purpose of the program is to remove application barriers for foster youth who are parenting and increase eligibility access to the child care scholarship program for the foster youth's child. The Department of Human Services (DHS) must make referrals to MSDE regarding the program.

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### **HB 1343 - Anne Arundel County**

Property Tax - Day Care Centers and Child Care Centers

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB1343>

**Sponsors:** Delegate Dana Jones, Delegate Heather Bagnall, and Delegate Dylan Behler

Exempts personal property used in connection with large family child care homes from taxation in Anne Arundel County and authorizes Anne Arundel County or municipalities in Anne Arundel County to grant a property tax credit against the tax owed on the portion of property used for certain child care centers and day care centers.

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### **HB1344 - Department of General Services**

Assessment of State-Owned Facilities for Child Care Centers

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB1344>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Dana Jones

Women's Caucus Priority

This bill requires the Department of General Services (DGS) to conduct an assessment of all facilities owned and operated by the State to evaluate whether a facility is suitable to lease to a child care center. DGS must report to the General Assembly on the results of the assessment by December 1, 2026, and post the report on its website.

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## **Family & Medical Leave**

### **HB102 and SB225**

Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program - Revisions

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB0102?ys=2025RS>

**Sponsor:** Departmental Bill, Department of Labor

This bill delays the Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) Program's contribution start date to January 1, 2027. It delays the payment start date by eighteen months to January 1, 2028. The bill alters other dates and components of program administration, including delaying optional participation in the program for self-employed individuals until regulations are adopted by July 1, 2028.

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### **HB1503 - State Personnel**

Paid Family & Medical Leave

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB1503>

**Sponsor:** Departmental Bill, Department of Budget and Management

This bill establishes new Paid Family and Medical Leave benefits for state employees beginning on July 1, 2026. The benefits will be equivalent to the benefits available under the private sector FAML I Program. The bill applies to all State employees, including temporary employees, in the Executive Branch.

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**SB785 - Labor and Employment**

Unpaid Parental Leave - Definition of Employer

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/SB0785>

**Sponsor:** Senator Justin Ready

This bill is a technical fix to the Maryland Parental Leave Act. It modifies the definition of employer to make clear that for employees of businesses that fluctuate just below or just above the 50-employee threshold, those employees covered under FMLA are not also covered under the Parental Leave Act.

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**Long-Term Care & Aging****HB36 and SB212 - Department of Aging**

Aging Services – Program Repeal and Consolidation

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB0036?ys=2025RS>

**Sponsor:** Departmental Bill, Maryland Department of Aging

This bill aligns with Maryland's Longevity Ready Initiative by modernizing and consolidating three longstanding state-funded programs administered by the Maryland Department of Aging (MDOA). These programs are Senior Care, the Senior Assisted Living Subsidy Program (SALS), and the Congregate Housing Services Program (CHSP). All three of these programs were created as nursing home diversion initiatives in the 1970s and 1980s. The proposed legislation will streamline these services, repeal an inactive Interagency Committee, and introduce a single program administered by the local Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs).

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**HB933 and SB679**

Nursing Home - Cost Reports

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB0933?ys=2025RS>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Ashanti Martinez and Senator Jim Rosapepe

MLAW Priority

More than 70% of nursing home residents are women. Additionally, 82% of the nursing home workforce is female. According to PHI's Maryland state index, these workers typically earn less than \$32,000 a year. This bill requires the Maryland Department of Health to review cost reports and other data submitted by each Medicaid nursing home. This will include data related to salaries and wages of all direct care non-administrative staff. This report is due annually on October 1 from 2025 to 2029. MDH must report these findings to the Governor, the Senate Finance Committee, and the House Health and Government Operations Committee.



### **HB1142 and SB920 - Public Health**

Maryland Interested Parties Advisory Group - Establishment

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB1142?ys=2025RS>

**Sponsors:** Delegate Heather Bagnall and Senator Dawn Gile

This bill codifies the Maryland Interested Parties Advisory Group (IPAG) in the Maryland Department of Health. The primary purpose of IPAG is to advise and consult on Medicaid payment rate sufficiency, ensuring adequate access to home health aides, personal care, and habilitation services. The group will evaluate the sufficiency of Medicaid payment rates and evaluate challenges to accessing care for Medicaid home- and community-based services. Beginning November 2025, IPAG will meet annually. IPAG will annually report recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly.

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### **HB1478 - Public Health**

Report on Establishing a Directory of Home Health Care Providers

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB1478>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Terri L. Hill

This bill requires the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to report on the feasibility of establishing and maintaining an online directory of home health care providers. This would allow individuals seeking home health care services to identify a home health care provider and support statewide communication among home health care providers. MDH must consult with the Maryland Department of Aging and other stakeholders, and submit a report by December 31, 2025, to the Senate Finance Committee and the House Health and Government Operations Committee.

## UPCOMING WOMEN'S ISSUES REPORTS & DEADLINES

### 2025 Deadlines

- **Public Health Abortion Grant Program**
  - Maryland Insurance Administration
  - Requires funds transfer from segregated accounts into the public health grant program on September 1, 2025, and July 1 each year thereafter.
- **Nursing Home Cost Reports**
  - Maryland Department of Health
  - October 1, 2025, and annually through 2029
- **Over-the-Counter Birth Control Collaborative**
  - Maryland Commission for Women, Maryland Department of Human Services
  - Interim Report January 1, 2026
  - Final Report December 1, 2027
- **Report on Establishing a Directory of Home Health Care Providers**
  - Maryland Department of Health, in consultation with the Department of Aging
  - Report due December 31, 2025
- **Workgroup on Newborn Nurse Home Visiting Services**
  - Maryland Family Network, in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Health
  - Report due December 31, 2025

### 2026 Deadlines

- **Hospital Doula and Childbirth Policies**
  - Maryland Department of Health
  - Hospitals must submit policies to MDH by January 1, 2026
  - MDH must make these policies available to the public
- **Domestic Violence Training for Barbers and Cosmetologists**
  - State Board of Barbers, State Board of Cosmetologists
  - Maryland Department of Labor
  - The department must approve an online course.
  - The requirement goes into effect January 1, 2026, for renewals and new applicants.
- **Pregnant and Parenting Students' Plans**
  - All Public Senior Higher Education Institutions
  - Plans must be posted on school websites by August 1, 2026
- **Interested Parties Advisory Group (IPAG)- Home and Community-Based Services**
  - Maryland Department of Health
  - Meet annually beginning November 1, 2025
  - Report due September 1, 2026, and annually thereafter

- **Family Child Care Homes and Child Care Centers - Regulatory Analysis**

- Maryland State Department of Education
- Interim report due January 1, 2026
- Final report due September 1, 2026

- **Maryland State Employees Paid Family & Medical Leave**

- Maryland Department of Budget and Management
- The program goes into effect on July 1, 2026

- **Assessment of State-Owned Facilities for Child Care Centers**

- Maryland Department of General Services
- Report due December 1, 2026

## 2027 Deadlines

- **Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program Effective Dates**

- Maryland Department of Labor
- FMLI Program's contribution start date will be January 1, 2027
- Program payments will begin January 1, 2028

- **Human Trafficking Training, Awareness, and Response**

- Maryland Department of Transportation
- State and contract transportation employers must certify employee training beginning January 1, 2027, and each January thereafter.

## BILLS TO WATCH IN 2026

### Women's Health

- 1) **HB629 and SB549** - Stop Silencing Survivors Act  
<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb0629>

**Sponsor:** Delegate J. Sandy Bartlett and Senator Sara Love  
**Status:** No Vote in the House or Senate

MLAW Priority  
 MCASA Priority

This bill would provide protections for survivors of sexual assault from retaliatory defamation lawsuits intended to silence them. It seeks to ensure good faith disclosures regarding sexual assaults are protected while maintaining legal avenues for false claims. Expected to return next session.

- 2) **HB830 and SB476** – Genetic Testing and Cancer Imaging - Required Coverage and Prohibited Cost-Sharing  
<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB0830>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Dana Jones and Senator Pamela Beidle

Women's Caucus Priority

**Status:** Passed the House but not the Senate

This bill would mandate insurance coverage without cost sharing for genetic testing and cancer imaging. Priority for Susan G Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, which states, "In the past, genetic testing for inherited breast cancer mutations only checked for mutations in BRCA 1 and BRCA 2 genes. Now, it's common to be tested for multiple other moderate to high-risk gene mutations in a practice called panel testing or multi-gene testing. Studies have shown that an estimated 83 percent of eligible patients who underwent multi-gene panel testing had changes to their medical management, including modifications in imaging follow-up and chemotherapy strategy."

- 3) **HB1050 and SB943** - Protective Orders - Surrender of Firearms  
<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb1050>

**Sponsor:** Delegate J. Sandy Bartlett and Senator Shelly Hettleman

**Status:** No Vote in the House or Senate

MLAW Priority  
 Maryland Commission for Women Priority

Would create the Task Force to Study the Use of Firearms in Domestic Violence Situations and require the Task Force to submit a report on its recommendations. Adds questions regarding gun ownership, among others, to petitions for protective orders in response to abuse.

## Women in the Workforce & Society

- 4) **HB1129 and SB733** - Constitutional Officers - Gender-Neutral Language  
<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgaweb/Legislation/Details/hb1129>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Dana Jones and Senator Nancy J. King

**Status:** No vote in either chamber

Women's Caucus Priority  
 Maryland Commission for Women Priority

Would alter terminology in the Maryland Constitution, regarding Constitutional officers, to be gender-neutral. The bill encourages gender equity in government and is therefore a priority for the Commission.

- 5) **HB1198 and SB632** – Correctional Services – Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services – Female Incarcerated Individuals (The Monica Cooper Prerelease Act)  
<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgaweb/Legislation/Details/hb1198>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Charlotte Crutchfield and Senator Mary Washington

**Status:** Passed House and Senate in a different posture.

MLAW Priority

Amends the law regarding the construction of a freestanding women's pre-release center. The bill would direct the Department of General Services to meet certain construction benchmarks in timing and location for the center. It would also require that certain gender-responsive services be offered to women currently incarcerated.

## The Care Economy

6) **HB862 and SB452** - Child Care Affordability Commission

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB0862?ys=2025RS>

**Sponsors:** Delegate Jared Solomon and Senator Nancy King

**Status:** No vote in either Chamber

Women's Caucus Priority

Would establish a two-year commission staffed by the Governor's Office for Children to study and make recommendations on improving child care affordability in Maryland. The Commission would identify obstacles to obtaining a fiscally sustainable system of child care and early childhood education, barriers to increasing the supply of child care, and measures to ensure the success and sustainability of the Child Care Scholarship Program and any additional measures to support working families, including business tax credits and other incentives for investments in child care, and revenue streams to create an adequate and sustainable source of funding for child care in the State.

7) **HB911** - Real Property- Landlord and Tenant - Family Child Care Homes Protections

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb0911>

**Sponsor:** Delegate Michele Guyton

**Status:** Passed House but not the Senate

Women's Caucus Priority

This legislation would prohibit landlords from unreasonably restricting the operation of family child care homes on their properties. Under the bill, a landlord may impose a security deposit in the amount of two months' rent and require a tenant operating or planning to operate a family child care home to provide a certificate of insurance naming the landlord as an additional insured on policies relating to the operation of the family child care home.

8) **HB1325 and SB868** - Substitute Child Care Provider Pool Pilot Program

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB1325?ys=2025RS>

**Sponsor:** Delegate April Miller and Senator Shaneka Henson

**Status:** Passed the House but not the Senate

This bill would establish the Substitute Child Care Provider Pool Pilot Program in the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to facilitate the continuous operation of child care facilities by ensuring qualified substitute child care providers are available to fill short-term staffing needs.





