



SB0406 – Prenatal and Infant Care Coordination – Grant Funding and Task Force
Presented to the Hon. Dolores G. Kelley and members of the Senate Finance Committee.
February 14, 2019, 1:00 p.m.

POSITION: SUPPORT

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland **urges the Senate Finance Committee to a favorable report on SB0406, Prenatal and Infant Care Coordination, sponsored by Senator Bill Ferguson.**

Our organization is an advocate for reproductive health, rights, and justice. We strive to ensure every individual has the freedom to decide if, when, and how to form their families, and to parent with dignity, in safety, and in good health. In doing so, we support programs to promote the general health and wellbeing of parents and their children, as these enable low-income women to make their desired pregnancy and parenting choices.

Maternal and child health are critical components to reproductive freedom and ensuring healthy individuals and families in Maryland. We believe that dedicating a Task Force, comprised of a range of experts, to this cause will foster positive health outcomes in our state.

SB0406 establishes the Maryland Prenatal and Infant Care Coordination Services Grant Program Fund, which serves to provide care-coordination services as well as evidence-based support services and interventions. In addition to establishing the fund, SB0406 creates a course of action for the continuance of the fund, as well as outlines how the fund will award grants to applicants.

In 2015, the infant mortality rate in Maryland was 6.7 per 1,000 births across all races, and 11.2 for Black Marylanders.¹ These rates are significantly higher than the national average for all races, which was 5.9 in 2015.² This increased infant mortality rate in Maryland demonstrates a critical need for public health intervention.

In utilizing care-coordination efforts, this bill aims to address the health disparities that are associated with infant mortality, which usually occur at higher rates among low-income women. Through funding efforts to promote prenatal and infant health, SB0406 seeks to decrease current health inequity that leads to unnecessary deaths and negative health outcomes.

We strongly support this effort to protect the rights, health, and dignity of women and children. For these reasons, **NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges a favorable committee report on SB0406.** Thank you for your time and consideration.

¹ Infant Mortality. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://goc.maryland.gov/infant-mortality/>

² Infant Mortality | Maternal and Infant Health | Reproductive Health | CDC. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/maternalinfanthealth/infantmortality.htm>