



Celebrating 50 Years of Advancing Justice

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Friend of the WLC

While some folks think of St. Patrick's Day as a time of parades and a sea of green, for advocates in Annapolis it usually also means: Cross Over Day! Cross Over Day is the 69th day of session and the day upon which any piece of legislation intending to become law must have already passed out of its originating chamber and "crossed-over" to the opposite chamber. It doesn't usually hit exactly on St. Patrick's Day, but it's always close and it signifies a narrowing of the playing field in terms of what bills are alive and still stand a chance of becoming law.

This year, Cross Over Day is March 21st, just a week away. And as it looms ever closer, the number of bill hearings is dwindling. While not definitive, bills heard during this last week are rarely able to move; there simply isn't enough time to be heard in committee, voted favorably, and then voted on the chamber floor. But that doesn't mean nothing is happening in Annapolis. On the contrary, voting sessions are becoming more frequent and floor sessions are lasting longer as elected officials scramble to get their bills across the street.

Below are some bills that have made progress this past week.

[SB 31 - Public Information Act – Inspection of Records From Body-Worn Digital Recording Devices](#) – passed the Senate and now is scheduled for a March 30th hearing in the House Judiciary committee.

[SB 71 – Hate Crimes – Civil Remedy](#) and [SB151 – Hate Crimes - False Statement to a Law Enforcement Officer](#) had already both passed the Senate, and this week the cross file for SB151, [HB645](#), passed out of the House and is headed to Judicial Proceedings for a cross-over hearing. [HB290](#), the cross-file of SB71, remains unvoted on in the Judiciary committee.

[HB 1080 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Children and Pregnant Women \(Healthy Babies Equity Act\)](#) - a bill to ensure pregnant individuals get the prenatal health care they need, regardless of their immigration status, received a favorable report from the House Health & Government Operations Committee and will be heard on the House floor this week.

[HB296 - Temporary Protective Orders - Electronic Filing and Video Conferencing Hearings](#) has passed out of the Judiciary Committee and passed Second Reader with Amendments. The WLC supported the amendments to the bill as they streamlined and clarified the process to allow individuals to file for a temporary protective order from a hospital setting.

[SB 33 - Criminal Law - Sexual Crimes – Fourth Degree Sexual Offense and Spousal Defense](#) – the House had already passed this bill clean, and now an amended version has passed out of the Senate. We remain concerned about the harmful amendments adopted by JPR and look forward to the [conference committee](#) process to come.

[HB639 - Family Law - Grounds for Divorce](#), which will make the divorce process less complicated and less lengthy for many Marylanders, passed favorably out of the Judiciary committee and now heads to the House floor for debate.

And finally, [HB 1171 – Declaration of Rights – Right to Reproductive Liberty](#), [HB 937 – Abortion Care Access Act](#), and [HB 952 – Access to Abortion Care and Health Insurance Act](#) are critical pieces of legislation that were voted on this past week. The Health & Government Operations Committee merged HB 952 into HB937 and voted both HB 937 and HB 1171 favorably out of committee. Floor arguments were heard on Thursday and both bills have now passed third reader and are on their way to being heard in the Senate. Watch below as [Delegate Ariana Kelly](#), the floor leader for both bills, provided a passionate and poised defense against a full slate of harmful

amendments. Please make sure to reach out and let [Delegate Kelly](#) know how much you appreciated her dedication to these issues!



Of course, there are still bills being heard in Committee this week. We will be supporting [SB 669 – the Pregnant Persons Freedom Act of 2022](#), whose cross-file was already heard in the House on Friday, and opposing a number of cross-files of anti-abortion bills as well.

Onward,

The WLC Advocacy Team

P.S. As always, if you appreciate the work we do, whether in the General Assembly or through our [direct legal services](#) across the State, [give here!](#) And if this email was forwarded to you by a friend, make sure to sign up for our legislative alerts [here!](#)

P.P.S. Save the Date for the WLC's 50th Anniversary Celebration and Awards Ceremony on May 19th, 6pm, at Live! Casino & Hotel! Join us in presenting the 50th Anniversary Legacy of Leadership Award to The Honorable Mary Ellen Barbera, Chief Judge (Ret.), Court of Appeals of Maryland; the 50th Anniversary Power of the Present Award to The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones, Speaker, The Maryland House of Delegates; and the 50th Anniversary Foundation of the Future Award, to Susan Francis, Executive Director, Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service. For more information or to buy tickets, click [HERE](#).

GIVE TODAY

Sponsorships and tickets now available for our 50th Anniversary Celebration & Awards Ceremony!

About The Women's Law Center of Maryland

The vision of the Women's Law Center of Maryland is a legal system that provides justice and fairness for women. The Women's Law Center's mission is to ensure the physical safety, economic security, and autonomy of women throughout the State. We work towards this goal by providing direct legal representation, information and referral services, and legislative advocacy.

Our efforts to promote justice, fairness, and equality for women are only possible because of friends like you.

Give Today

The Women's Law Center of Maryland, Inc. is a charitable organization designated as tax-exempt under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3). A copy of our financial statement is available upon request. Documents and information submitted under the State of Maryland Charitable Solicitations Act are available from the Office of the Secretary of State of Maryland, Annapolis, MD 21401 for the cost of copying and postage.

