



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

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Senate Bill 0438
Public Schools – Pregnant and Parenting Students – Policies and Reports
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs- February 25, 2021
SUPPORT

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC) for the 2021 legislative session. WDC is one of the largest and most active Democratic Clubs in our County with hundreds of politically active women and men, including many elected officials. **WDC supports SB0438 Public Schools – Pregnant and Parenting Students – Policies and Reports.**

Specifically, SB0438 will support pregnant and parenting youth by connecting students with the necessary resources to achieve their desired pregnancy, parenting, and education related goals.

This bill will:

1. Establish a safe and private lactation space in each Maryland public high school with a designated tabletop space, sink, and outlet for a breast pump. These spaces will not be closets or bathrooms.
2. Assign a liaison in each school who will be responsible for connecting pregnant and parenting students with resources pertaining to childcare and transportation.
3. Require each school district and the State Department of Education to establish a model policy in support of the education and parenting goals of students.
4. Support training for school personnel to offer further guidance and support.

In 2018 there were at least 2,645 births to teenagers under the age of 19 in the state, however, there is very little data on the outcomes for these teens in Maryland. It is important we track these outcomes. We know that nationally only 40% of teenage mothers finish high school, often leaving school due to the lack of support for childcare, attending doctor's visits, and finding resources to help balance parenting responsibilities and full-time coursework. Importantly, new mothers also face the barrier of trying to find a safe and private space for lactation, as few high schools offer a place to do so. Allowing a mother to breastfeed her baby in a safe and private space on school grounds will not only allow her to tend to her child's needs, but also reduce the likelihood that she will leave school due to a lack of support.

Therefore, **WDC recommends a favorable report on Senate Bill 0438.**

Respectfully,

Diana Conway
President