

Annotated Code of Maryland
(1984 Volume and 1985 Supplement)

Preamble

WHEREAS, Adolescent pregnancy is an extremely complex problem which is costly in both human and fiscal terms; and

WHEREAS, Maryland ranks fourth nationally in the percent of births to adolescents that occur out of wedlock; and

WHEREAS, Certain areas of the State are well above the national average in incidence of adolescent pregnancies and Baltimore City is experiencing the highest rate of adolescent births for a city of its size in the nation; and

WHEREAS, Pregnancy for adolescents often results in major health problems for themselves and their babies including higher rates of premature and low-birth-weight babies along with the related higher incidences of infant mortality, congenital defects, mental retardation, and other serious childhood diseases; and

WHEREAS, Adolescent parents, both male and female, often suffer from lower educational attainment and limited career opportunities resulting in a higher dependence on welfare support for financial assistance over prolonged periods; and

WHEREAS, The State of Maryland through the Departments of Health and Mental Hygiene, Human Resources, Employment and Training, and Education spends millions of federal and State funds to address the short and long term economic, social, and health-related consequences of adolescent pregnancy; and

WHEREAS, There are numerous public and private agencies and organizations attempting to prevent adolescent pregnancies as well as address the needs of pregnant or parenting adolescents; and

WHEREAS, It is essential that the State of Maryland attempt to reduce the incidence of adolescent pregnancy by a minimum of 50 percent by 1995; and

WHEREAS, Adolescent pregnancy is a problem of such magnitude and cost that it cannot be addressed by government alone, and therefore requires a highly cooperative and coordinated effort by all levels of government and the private sector; and

WHEREAS, The Governor's Task Force on Teenage Pregnancy recognized the need for greater coordination and recommended the establishment of an ongoing Governor's Council on Adolescent Pregnancy; and

WHEREAS, The General Assembly finds that adolescent pregnancy is a serious social problem. Adolescent pregnancy