



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

February 12, 2020

House Bill 87

Public Health – Immunizations – Minor Consent (Access to Vaccines Act)

House Health and Government Operations Committee

Position: OPPOSE

The Maryland Catholic Conference represents the mutual public-policy interests of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, including the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Diocese of Wilmington. We offer this testimony in opposition to House Bill 87.

The Catholic Church believes that immunizing against disease is an important and morally responsible action. Parents bear the first responsibility for their children's physical well-being; House Bill 87 would allow a health care provider to provide an immunization to a minor without the consent of a parent. This legislative proposal would seriously undermine parental rights and authority and bypass parental involvement, wisdom and guidance.

Minor children are not mature enough to think through the consequences of complicated medical decisions. House Bill 87 would allow minors to face decisions about immunizations without parental guidance and insight which leaves them open to pressure and coercion from outside interests and influences.

Rather than excluding parents, our government should be working to support and assist parents in making the best decisions possible for their children, especially when serious medical issues, are at stake.

For these reasons, we urge an unfavorable report on House Bill 87.