



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

**February 09, 2021**

**SB 117**

**Workgroup on Minority Homeownership, Neighborhood Revitalization, and Household Wealth Equity**

**Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs**

**Position: Support**

The Maryland Catholic Conference (“Conference”) represents the public policy interests of the three Roman Catholic (arch) dioceses serving Maryland: the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Diocese of Wilmington.

Senate Bill 117 establishes the Workgroup on Minority Homeownership, Neighborhood Revitalization, and Household Wealth Equity; requiring the Workgroup to study and make recommendations to promote homeownership and create wealth-building opportunities for minority households and promote community revitalization through targeted investments in homeownership; requiring the Workgroup to report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 1, 2021.

Housing is a universal and inviolable right of all persons because it is necessary to live a genuinely human life. This right must be available to all people. The U.S. Catholic Bishops have long expressed concerns about acts that undermine fair housing such as redlining, disinvestment from communities, discriminatory practices in the sale or rental of housing, racial and economic segregation, and other harmful practices that do not respect the inherent dignity of all people. In the recent pastoral statement, *Open Wide Our Hearts*, the U.S. Bishops call attention to the fact that these policies continue to harm communities of color today. *“The poverty experienced by many of these communities has its roots in racist policies that continue to impede the ability of people to find affordable housing, meaningful work, adequate education, and social mobility.”* This bill will work to find ways to increase minority homeownership and identify programs and resources available to minority communities to achieve greater minority homeownership.

The Conference appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 117.