



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

February 8, 2023

Senate Bill 149

Education - Curriculum - Unit of Instruction on September 11, 2001, Terrorist Attacks

Senate Education, Energy and the Environmental Committee

Position: INFORMATION ONLY

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this STATEMENT OF INFORMATION to Senate Bill 149. We offer this testimony on behalf of the families of approximately 50,000 students served by more than 150 PreK-12 Catholic schools in Maryland. The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 149 would require each public school and nonpublic school that participates in state-funded education program to include in its curriculum a unit of instruction on the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

The Conference appreciates the end goal of this legislation. Remembering those heroes who lost their lives in sacrifice to others as first responders in the September 11, 2001, attacks is vital in a historical context. Moreover, a way to continuously honor their sacrifices is to educate future generations about the circumstances of that fateful day and how those who gave their lives in service to others willingly did so.

However, as Maryland's nonpublic schools often already teach units about the events of September 11, 2001, as well as the sacrifices made by countless Americans on that day, we respectfully request that the state not dictate their particular curriculum as independent schools.

Nonpublic schools are approved and/or licensed by the State Department of Education and meet all institutional requirements placed on them by law. However, Maryland law regards nonpublic school curriculum as independent of that of our public schools for numerous reasons and this bill mandates particular curriculum on certain nonpublic schools.

To the extent that curriculum is more than encouraged, but is rather mandated, on nonpublic schools in the state, we respectfully disagree.