



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

February 17, 2026

HB 750

Criminal Law - Interference With Access to or Egress From a Religious Facility - Prohibition

House Judiciary Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of House Bill 750. The Catholic Conference represents the public policy interests of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, including the Archdioceses of Baltimore and Washington and the Diocese of Wilmington, 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.

This legislation would make it illegal for any person or group to prevent another from entering or exiting a "religious facility". Religious facilities would include any place of worship, cemetery, or any faith-based educational facility or community center.

This legislation aims to ensure that no person is prevented from peaceable ingress and egress into a religious facility. Where such disruption is attempted, it is often times born out of a disagreement with or protest to one's faith tradition or beliefs and/or the activities associated therewith. Pope Francis has stated that the "problem of intolerance must be confronted in all its forms" and that where persons are "persecuted and marginalized because of [their] religious convictions or ethnic identity, the wellbeing of society as a whole is endangered and each one of us must feel affected." (Pope Francis, *Address to a Delegation from the Simon Wiesenthal Center*, 2013)

The freedom to peacefully worship has been a seminal part of the history of our great state and a value Marylanders have prioritized for centuries. Likewise, we believe the purpose of this bill to be aligned with that continuing tradition and priority. It is important to note that the amendments the Conference submitted accompanying its testimony in the cross-file bill, SB 177, are reflected in this House version. We thank the sponsoring delegate for his accommodations.

We also thank the sponsors of this bill for their steadfast commitment to upholding religious liberty in Maryland. We urge this committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 750 in its current form.