

SENATE BILL 177

E1
SB 287/25 – JPR

(PRE-FILED)

6lr1276
CF 6lr0790

By: Senator West

Requested: October 21, 2025

Introduced and read first time: January 14, 2026

Assigned to: Judicial Proceedings

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Criminal Law – Interference With Access to or Egress From a Religious Facility**
3 **– Prohibition**

4 FOR the purpose of prohibiting a person, acting alone or with others, from preventing
5 another from entering or exiting a religious facility; and generally relating to access
6 to or egress from religious facilities.

7 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

8 Article – Criminal Law
9 Section 10–204 and 10–302
10 Annotated Code of Maryland
11 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

12 BY adding to

13 Article – Criminal Law
14 Section 10–204.1
15 Annotated Code of Maryland
16 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

17 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
18 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

19 Article – Criminal Law

20 10–204.

21 (a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

22 (2) (i) “Medical facility” means:

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



8 (b) (1) This section does not apply to:

9 (i) the chief executive officer of the medical facility;

10 (ii) a designee of the chief executive officer of the medical facility;

11 (iii) an agent of the medical facility; or

12 (iv) a law enforcement officer.

13 (2) This section does not prohibit:

14 (i) speech; or

15 (ii) picketing in connection with a labor dispute as defined in §
16 4-301 of the Labor and Employment Article.

17 (c) A person may not intentionally act, alone or with others, to prevent another
18 from entering or exiting a medical facility by physically:

19 (1) detaining the other; or

20 (2) obstructing, impeding, or hindering the other's passage.

21 (d) A person who violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction
22 is subject to imprisonment not exceeding 90 days or a fine not exceeding \$1,000 or both.

23 10-204.1.

24 (A) (1) IN THIS SECTION, "RELIGIOUS FACILITY" MEANS REAL PROPERTY
25 THAT IS OWNED, LEASED, OR USED BY A RELIGIOUS ENTITY OR FOR ANY RELIGIOUS
26 PURPOSE.

27 (2) "RELIGIOUS FACILITY" INCLUDES:

28 (I) A PLACE OF WORSHIP:

(II) A CEMETERY;

(III) A RELIGIOUS SCHOOL, EDUCATIONAL FACILITY, OR
COMMUNITY CENTER; AND

(IV) THE GROUNDS ADJACENT TO THEM.

5 (B) (1) THIS SECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO:

6 (I) THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE RELIGIOUS
7 FACILITY;

8 (II) A DESIGNEE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE
9 RELIGIOUS FACILITY;

(iii) AN AGENT OF THE RELIGIOUS FACILITY; OR

11 (IV) A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER.

12 (2) THIS SECTION DOES NOT PROHIBIT SPEECH.

13 (C) A PERSON MAY NOT INTENTIONALLY ACT, ALONE OR WITH OTHERS, TO
14 PREVENT ANOTHER FROM ENTERING OR EXITING A RELIGIOUS FACILITY BY
15 PHYSICALLY:

16 (1) DETAINING THE OTHER; OR

(2) OBSTRUCTING, IMPEDING, OR HINDERING THE OTHER'S PASSAGE.

18 (D) A PERSON WHO VIOLATES THIS SECTION IS GUILTY OF A MISDEMEANOR
19 AND ON CONVICTION IS SUBJECT TO IMPRISONMENT NOT EXCEEDING 90 DAYS OR A
20 FINE NOT EXCEEDING \$1,000 OR BOTH.

21 10-302.

22 A person may not deface, damage, or destroy, or attempt or threaten to deface,
23 damage, or destroy, personal or real property that is owned, leased, or used by a religious
24 entity or for any religious purpose including:

25 (1) a place of worship;

26 (2) a cemetery;

- (3) a religious school, educational facility, or community center; and
- (4) the grounds adjacent to them.

3 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
4 October 1, 2026.