



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

February 27, 2020

SB 649

Public Information Act – Motor Vehicle Administration – Warrant for Personal Information and Reporting

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

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 649 provides that the Motor Vehicle Administration may not disclose an individual’s personal information to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) without a judicial warrant or subpoena.

The Catholic Church has historically held a strong interest in immigration and how public policy affects immigrants seeking a new life in the United States. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops supports comprehensive immigration reform. However, in the absence of such reform, immigration law enforcement can neither cease completely nor continue unabated in its current status. There has to be greater clarity in the roles of local, state, and federal law enforcement in immigration enforcement and detainment. The Bible guides us in stating that “[y]ou shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; have the same love for him as for yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt” (Lv 19:33-34).

Without being able to rely on over-reaching and inhumane tactics such as 287(g) programs everywhere in the state, ICE has resorted to attempting to gain information about our undocumented neighbors through agency records. However and fortunately, because the Motor Vehicle Administration is a state agency, Maryland can and should regulate access to the private information it stores. Further, because Maryland allows undocumented individuals to obtain drivers licenses, it has a duty to protect their personal information as well. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops stresses how in situations like this, “[t]he native [should] not have superior rights over the immigrant. Before God all are equal; the earth was given by God to all.”

The Conference appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 649.