



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

February 11, 2020

HB 403

Immigration Enforcement – Public Schools, Hospitals, and Courthouses – Policies

House Judiciary 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.

House Bill 403 directs the Attorney General to develop guidelines that assist public schools, hospitals, and courthouses to draft policies that limit civil immigration enforcement on their premises.

The Catholic Church has historically held a strong interest in immigration and how public policy affects immigrants seeking to live their lives in the United States. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has written extensively of their support for codifying these sensitive locations into law, stating that although we “respect the right of our country to enforce its immigration laws...we work to quell community fear and encourage participation in daily life among our immigrant parishioners, [and] it is vital that all sensitive community locations remain free from nonessential immigration enforcement actions and surveillance by ICE and CBP officials.”

The Conference strongly supports legislation that protects immigrants and their families. A person and their family shouldn’t have to live in fear from the very entities who are tasked with keeping every person safe and healthy and helping our communities thrive. This fear is palpable and it permeates all aspects of a person’s life, such as running errands, driving children to and from school or activities, attending religious services, and going to work. Living in such fear has chilling effects on one’s well-being in terms of stability and ability to contribute positively to their family and community.

The Conference appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 403.