



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

**February 4, 2020**

**HB 92**

**Sales and Use Tax – Tax-Free Periods – University and College Textbooks**

**House Ways & Means Committee**

**Position: Support**

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 92. 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.

We offer our support for House Bill 92 – Sales and Use Tax – Tax-Free Periods – University and College Textbooks. This legislation would provide college students with a one-week period each semester wherein they can buy textbooks free of state sales tax. The first annual tax-free period would run for the last seven days of August, beginning in 2020. The second annual tax-free period for college textbooks runs for the last seven days of January, beginning in 2021.

The Catholic Conference supports education policies that enable all students the ability to afford high-quality educational options. With the rising costs of college and students incurring sometimes crippling debt to simply afford their college educations, every bit of assistance the state can afford to give within its means should be provided. We also support this bill because it would encourage students to purchase textbooks from in-state suppliers, rather than shopping online or elsewhere.

For these reasons, we urge your support and favorable report of House Bill 92.