



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

February 17, 2021

**House Bill 466
Higher Education - Student Identification Cards - Required Information**

House Appropriations Committee

Position: SUPPORT

The Maryland Catholic Conference represents the public-policy interests of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, the Archdioceses of Baltimore and Washington and the Diocese of Wilmington, which together encompass over one million Marylanders.

House Bill 466 requires institutions of higher education to list a suicide helpline on the back of student ID cards. Since students frequently carry their ID cards in their phone case or wallet, having the hotline number on their card will ensure help is just a phone call away.

The rate of suicide in Maryland has risen steadily over the last two decades and its effects devastate families and communities. Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death for young people in Maryland¹ and in a single month last year during the pandemic, one in four college-aged young people reported seriously considering suicide².

Those experiencing mental illness are among the most marginalized and underserved in our society. The Catholic Church through its parishes, charities and other ministries reaches out pastorally to those struggling with mental illness. The Maryland Catholic Conference HB 466 because suicide prevention represents our commitment to the dignity of every human life and our belief that each person is made in the image and likeness of God. Any person experiencing mental illness or suicidal thoughts deserves compassionate care and healing to rediscover their intrinsic value and worth.

It is for these reasons that the Maryland Catholic Conference respectfully urges a favorable report for **HB 466**. Thank you for your consideration.

¹ [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#), "Suicide Facts & Figures: Maryland 2019"

² [CDC](#), "Mental Health, Substance Use, and Suicidal Ideation During the COVID-19 Pandemic" June 24–30, 2020