



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

January 20, 2021

HB 258

State Child Welfare System - Reporting

House Appropriations

Position: Support

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 258. 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.

House Bill 258 would require the addition of certain important information categories to the reporting requirements relative to children and foster youth in the State child welfare system. The additional categories would help gather information to help formulate later policies for assisting youth in the State child welfare system with such things as maintaining educational continuity and special education services, safeguarding against instances of abuse and neglect, provision of mental health services, and limiting involvement with the justice system.

Foster youth and those in the State child welfare system face unique challenges, as they often must enter adulthood with little or no support system. They must often rely only on themselves to achieve educational milestones. They often lack access to or knowledge of services that children in other circumstances might otherwise be provided.

The Conference thus maintains that any support that foster care recipients and other children who rely on public assistance to guide them is a worthwhile investment in Maryland's future. Therefore, we urge this Committee to report favorably on House Bill 258.