



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

January 19, 2021

**House Bill 338
Business Regulation - Innkeepers - Records and Human Trafficking
Awareness Training**

House Economic Matters Committee

Position: SUPPORT

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in **SUPPORT** of **House Bill 338**. The 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.

HB 338 requires innkeepers to maintain a computerized recordkeeping system of all guest transactions and receipts, which shall be retained for at least six months. The bill also requires the Governor's Office for Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services to approve an educational training program and a refresher training program about human trafficking and requires innkeepers to provide the training annually to employees.

The Maryland Catholic Conference supports this bill because it educates those working in the lodging business on trafficking and aids law enforcement in their efforts to identify and end human trafficking. Calls to the National Human Trafficking Hotline show hotels and lodging establishments as frequent locations utilized by traffickers for both commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor. Maryland is also uniquely positioned to be a "hot spot" for human trafficking activity, due to the interstate highways that run through it, its close proximity to numerous large cities, and its ports of call and major international airports.

Pope Francis frequently condemns the horror of trafficking in persons, recently declaring, "Human trafficking is an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ." We believe this bill would help alleviate some of this scourge in our state.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference respectfully urges a favorable report for **HB 338**. Thank you for your consideration.