



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

March 4, 2021

HB 1161

Income Tax - Subtraction Modification - School Supplies

House Ways & Means Committee

Position: Support

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 1161. 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 1161, which would expand current law to allow a subtraction modification for the purchase of hardware and virtual learning material necessitated by the coronavirus pandemic. The bill would allow the tax deduction in the amount of \$250 for any expenses incurred during 2020 and 2021 tax years.

Catholic schools have largely been engaged in some form of hybrid learning since the pandemic. While many students have been in school five days per week, many students have elected to learn virtually full-time, as well. Additionally, a number of high schools have implemented half-time distance learning. Our schools have successfully made every effort to enable learning continuity in this time and this bill would serve as a reprieve for the sacrifices made by many parents to ensure their students continued learning.

Additionally, as Maryland's Catholic schools educate tens of thousands of lower and middle-income families every year, the Maryland Catholic Conference offers its support for House Bill 1161 as a means of assisting those families.

Particularly in the lowest-income schools and districts, if parents and students were afforded increased buying power due to the money saved from the deduction allowed by House Bill 1161, students who traditionally face challenges to being materially prepared to learn will have an increased chance of success. It is particularly imperative that we support those students in these difficult times.

We thus encourage your support and a favorable report for House Bill 1161.