



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

March 10, 2022

SB 795

**Community Colleges and Private Nonprofit Institutions of Higher Education –
Funding**

Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

SUPPORT

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 795. 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.

Senate Bill 795 increases the statutory funding percentages for the Senator John A. Cade (local community college), Baltimore City Community College (BCCC), and Joseph A. Sellinger (private nonprofit institutions) funding formulas beginning in fiscal 2024.

Particularly with the increasing costs of postsecondary education, local community colleges are integral to providing access to higher education for Maryland residents. To that end, the Conference supports legislation such as Senate Bill 795 that promotes access to a quality education, as the same leads to gainful employment, thus breaking the cycle of poverty plaguing many low-income communities. Pope Francis has stated that the Church should highly value education, leading to gainful employment, as it is through the same that “human beings express and enhance the dignity of their lives.” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 192).

Moreover, the Sellinger Formula serves Maryland’s independent colleges and universities, which include four Catholic institutions of higher education. To that end, we very much support the modest increase in the Sellinger formula put forth in this legislation to support those institutions.

It is well-settled that education is the best tool for breaking the cycle of poverty and the Church therefore supports efforts to assist students in obtaining postsecondary degrees. It is for all of these reasons that we urge this Committee to report favorably on Senate Bill 795.