



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

February 08, 2022

HB 345

Baltimore City and Prince George's County - Grant Funding - Violence Prevention and Community Service

House Appropriations Committee

Position: Support

The Maryland Catholic Conference (“Conference”) represents the public policy interests of the three Roman Catholic (arch)dioceses serving Maryland: the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Diocese of Wilmington.

House Bill 345 requires the Governor to annually include \$500,000 in the annual budget bill for the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office and the Prince George's County State's Attorney's Office for grants to nonprofit organizations to fund violence prevention and community service initiatives; requiring the offices to establish certain procedures and enhance certain coordination of services; requiring an organization that receives grant funding to comply with certain data sharing and reporting requirements.

The Catholic Church has a strong interest in public safety and keeping communities safe from violence. In a pastoral letter, *The Enduring Power of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's Principles of Nonviolence*, Archbishop William E. Lori states “*Without denying or minimizing the tragic problems that beset our community, we need to abstain from a narrative of hopelessness that fails to see the good that is going on all around us. We need to acknowledge and actively support the efforts of many in the government, faith communities, education and non-profit communities to improve conditions, not to mention the heroic efforts and witness of many good people who live in our most underserved neighborhoods. When we fail to heed these voices and acknowledge their good work, we weave a story of despair, a self-fulfilling prophecy that only makes things worse. Hopelessness, as much as violence, destroys people and their communities. On the other hand, when we acknowledge one another's efforts and try to maximize and coordinate them, then we are building enthusiasm, momentum and goodwill – all necessary ingredients for achieving a better day.*”

House Bill 345 seeks to identify and prioritize violence impacting communities and offer viable solutions, involving networks that can effectively address the issue using multiple strategies to reduce and prevent violence within our communities.

The Conference appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 345.