



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

March 1st, 2023

SB 756

Access to Counsel in Evictions - Funding

Budget & Taxation Committee

Position: Favorable

The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 756 would require the Comptroller to distribute a certain amount of certain abandoned property funds to the Access to Counsel in Evictions Special Fund; and generally relating to the Access to Counsel in Evictions Special Fund.

The foundation of Catholic Social Teaching is the recognition of the life and dignity of the human person. The Church has traditionally viewed housing, not as a commodity, but as a basic human right. This conviction is grounded in our view of the human person and the responsibility of society to protect the life and dignity of every person by providing the conditions where human life and human dignity are not undermined but enhanced. As Pope John Paul II stated, "*A house is much more than a roof over one's head. It is a place where a person creates and lives out his or her life.*"

Our legal system rests upon the principle that everyone is entitled to due process of law and a meaningful opportunity to be heard. Thus, Senate Bill 756 will provide essential legal representation for our most vulnerable populations of Maryland.

The Conference appreciates your consideration and respectfully urges a **favorable** report for Senate Bill 756.