



MARYLAND  
CATHOLIC  
CONFERENCE

February 22, 2023

SB 837

**Education – Curriculum – Study of the Holocaust (Educate to Stop the Hate Act)**

**Senate Education, Energy & the Environmental Committee**

**Position: INFORMATION ONLY**

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this STATEMENT OF INFORMATION to Senate Bill 837. We offer this testimony on behalf of the families of approximately 50,000 students served by more than 150 PreK-12 Catholic schools in Maryland. 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 837 would require the State Department of Education to develop guidelines on instructional content on the Holocaust that is age-appropriate, interdisciplinary and consistent with the applicable grade level instruction. Nonpublic schools that participate in state-funded education programs would be required to include this instructional curriculum for the 2024-2025 school year.

The Conference appreciates the end goal of this legislation. Teaching about the horrors and historical atrocities of the Holocaust is indubitably important. However, what makes nonpublic schools unique is their instructional autonomy. Catholic schools teach units on the Holocaust in their own dedicated way. Accordingly, we respectfully request that the state not dictate their particular curriculum as independent schools.

Nonpublic schools are approved and/or licensed by the State Department of Education and meet all institutional requirements placed on them by law. However, Maryland law regards nonpublic school curriculum as independent of that of our public schools for numerous reasons and this bill mandates particular curriculum on certain nonpublic schools.

To the extent that curriculum is more than encouraged, but is rather mandated, on nonpublic schools in the state, we respectfully disagree. As most nonpublic schools do already teach about the Holocaust in their own way, oftentimes even more comprehensively, we ask that they continue to be given the autonomy to do so.