



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

January 31, 2024

**HB 137
Civil Actions - Civil Immunity - Educator Intervention**

House Judiciary Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony of favorable with amendments for House Bill 137. 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. We offer this testimony on behalf of the families of more than 50,000 students served by over 150 PreK-12 Catholic schools in Maryland.

House Bill 137 would provide immunity from civil liability for school teachers, staff or administrators who intervene in student altercations. The bill requires that said school personnel intervene in a reasonably prudent manner and that their intervention does not include any intentionally tortious or grossly negligent conduct. This bill would apply to intervening educators at public and nonpublic schools.

This bill protects students and teachers alike. In a time where school safety has become a paramount concern of parents, students and the dedicated educators charged with their wellbeing during the school day, this bill is a great step today ensuring that good deeds do not go punished. Empowering those educators to intervene in student altercations by ameliorating the fear of civil liability will indubitably promote more instances of intervention. Over time, knowing the educators will intervene in altercations might quell peer-on-peer school violence and thus eventually help to perpetuate alternative methods of dispute resolution amongst students.

The State of Maryland strongly values education as a bedrock of society and invests a great deal of resources into its teachers and students. This bill is another step toward a safe and secure school day for both, enhancing the productivity of the school day. Maryland should do all it can to keep educators and children safe, both physically and emotionally, and this bill further promotes those values. It is for these reasons the we urge a favorable report on House Bill 137.