



March 11, 2025

HB 1472

State Government – State House Trust – Ten Commandments Monument Display Act

House Health & Government Operations Committee

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference requests a Favorable report on House Bill 1472. 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.

The MCC supports HB 1472, which would require the placement of a Ten Commandments monument on the grounds of the Maryland State House. The Ten Commandments are not only a cornerstone of the Judeo-Christian tradition but also a foundational influence on our legal and moral framework.

The Ten Commandments have long served as a guide for ethical living, shaping legal traditions and moral discourse across cultures and faiths. Principles such as honoring truth, respecting human dignity, and upholding justice transcend religious boundaries and are deeply embedded in the fabric of civil society. Recognizing these values in a public space reaffirms the enduring moral principles that promote the common good and the just governance of society. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches, the Commandments “express man's fundamental duties toward God and toward his neighbor” (CCC 2072). While rooted in divine revelation, their moral wisdom resonates beyond faith communities, offering guidance for the cultivation of virtue, respect for others, and the promotion of a just society.

Maryland has a rich history of religious freedom and pluralism, dating back to its founding as a haven for Catholics and others seeking to practice their faith freely. The inclusion of a Ten Commandments monument at the State House would serve as a historical acknowledgment of the profound influence of faith on the development of our legal system and civic institutions. Throughout American history, the principles found in the Commandments have informed legal structures, from prohibitions against theft and perjury to the fundamental recognition of human dignity and the rights of others. Many statehouses and public institutions across the nation have recognized this heritage by displaying the Ten Commandments, not as an

endorsement of any one faith, but as an acknowledgment of their role in shaping the moral and ethical foundation of society.

The presence of a Ten Commandments monument at the Maryland State House would serve as a unifying reminder of our shared commitment to justice, integrity, and the dignity of the human person. It would stand as a call to all people—regardless of religious belief—to uphold values that foster the common good, promote responsibility, and encourage a just and moral society.

As Catholics, we recognize that faith and reason work together to uphold the dignity of every human being and the moral order of society. The placement of a Ten Commandments monument at the Maryland State House would be a fitting acknowledgment of these enduring truths. I respectfully urge the Committee to give a **favorable report** on HB 1472. Thank you for your time and consideration.