



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

February 11, 2025

**House Bill 455
Braille Flag Memorial Act of 2025
House Health and Government Operations Committee**

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) 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.

House Bill 455 requires the Department of Veterans and Military Families to designate a location for an American braille tactile flag to be placed on the grounds of one or more State veterans' cemeteries.

A Braille flag in a cemetery is a meaningful and inclusive tribute, providing blind veterans and individuals with a tactile way to experience the American flag. This allows them to engage with a powerful national symbol through touch, fostering a sense of connection, dignity, and patriotism. For many blind individuals, physical interaction is essential in interpreting the world, and a Braille flag ensures they are not excluded from honoring their country and fallen heroes. Beyond its significance to the blind community, the presence of a Braille flag serves as a powerful reminder to sighted individuals of the importance of accessibility and inclusion. It symbolizes a nation's commitment to honoring all individuals, regardless of ability, and encourages greater understanding and awareness of the experiences of blind veterans and citizens.¹

Incorporating Braille into a patriotic symbol reinforces the message that service and sacrifice are not defined by physical ability and that every individual deserves recognition and respect. Placing a Braille flag in a cemetery ensures that future generations understand and appreciate the diverse ways people experience and honor their country. It is our responsibility to affirm that individuals who are visually impaired are active, valued, and vital members of our communities—beloved children of God who contribute meaningfully to society.² The Braille flag

¹ <https://www.abfp.us/>

² <https://capp-usa.org/fratelli-tutti/>

stands as a testament to the core values of equality, respect, and unity—principles that are fundamental to our nation’s identity.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for a favorable report on **HB 455**.

Thank you for your consideration.