



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

April 1, 2026

HB 505

**Public and Nonpublic Schools - Student School Transfers - Academic Records
Documentation**

Senate Education, Energy & the Environment Committee

Position: UNFAVORABLE

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in opposition to House Bill 505. 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 approximately 50,000 students served by over 150 PreK-12 Catholic schools in Maryland.

House Bill 505 would force schools where a student is transferring into to accept any number of items in lieu of an official transcript, simply because there is a "dispute between the sending school and the student" resulting in denial of records being sent from the previous school.

In the context of Maryland's nonpublic schools, which are nearly 1,300 schools and 138,000+ students, what this legislation is seeking to do is undo and/or interfere with private contractual rights and recourse for schools against parents who have not paid their promised tuition. Nonpublic schools rely almost entirely on tuition to keep teachers paid, lights and heat on, and high-quality curriculum materials in the classrooms, just to name a few basic expenditures. At nonpublic schools, parents sign a contract promising to pay tuition, which schools then use for the aforementioned operational expenses. When parents violate or breach that agreed-upon contractual duty, it makes it difficult or impossible for schools to operate. This hurts the rest of the students, teachers and administrators.

Very often, parents will leave tuition unpaid and then jettison to another private school for various reasons, only to go pay tuition at the next school. They often have the means to pay, but instead leave their previous school without the income administrators budgeted for to pay teachers, maintenance, utilities and for materials or education technology. Thus, this sole avenue of recourse is dire for schools, many of which operate on very thin budgets.

Currently, the ability to withhold transcripts often results in payment or settlement agreements, thus peaceably resolving the situation. **Overly vague terms such as "disputes between" students and schools creates a myriad of legal interpretation questions.** Regardless, the state should not impede free, fair and willing contractual obligations entered into by its citizens. It is for these reasons that we urge an unfavorable report on House Bill 505.