



April 7, 2026

HB 1034

Child Care - Child Abuse and Neglect - Training Requirements

House Ways & Means Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of House Bill 1034, a amended by the House of Delegates. 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 Maryland Catholic Conference also offers this testimony on behalf of the families of approximately 50,000 students served by more than 150 PreK-12 Catholic schools in Maryland.

House Bill 1034 would require important mandatory training on child abuse and neglect. The Conference wholeheartedly supports such a measure. The Conference originally suggested that, rather than require teachers and staff to complete the training proscribed by Family Law Article 5-716 as procured by the state department of education, the bill should allow for a substitute course that is at least as comprehensive and covering the same topics is well warranted. That appears to have been addressed in the House amendments.

Maryland's Catholic schools have long observed stringent child protection measures beyond what was previously required by the State. As a matter of course, Catholic schools conduct mandatory criminal background checks on all employees and on volunteers who work with children, provide comprehensive awareness training to educate adults and children on how to recognize predatory behaviors, and promptly report all suspected incidents of child sexual abuse.

Our teachers and staff are required to undergo training on child abuse and neglect that is often over and above what is ultimately required through Family Law Article 5-716. Rather than force them into duplicative training, we propose to allow them to satisfy the requirements of this bill through internal training that is at least as comprehensive and includes those provision or topics covered by the Family Law Article 5-716 training. Hopefully, the amended version of the bill will address that concern.