

SENATE BILL 177

E1
SB 287/25 – JPR

(PRE-FILED)

6lr1276
CF 6lr0790

By: **Senator West**

Requested: October 21, 2025

Introduced and read first time: January 14, 2026

Assigned to: Judicial Proceedings

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Criminal Law – Interference With Access to or Egress From a Religious Facility**
3 **– Prohibition**

4 FOR the purpose of prohibiting a person, acting alone or with others, from preventing
5 another from entering or exiting a religious facility; and generally relating to access
6 to or egress from religious facilities.

7 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
8 Article – Criminal Law
9 Section 10–204 and 10–302
10 Annotated Code of Maryland
11 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

12 BY adding to
13 Article – Criminal Law
14 Section 10–204.1
15 Annotated Code of Maryland
16 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

17 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
18 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

19 **Article – Criminal Law**

20 10–204.

21 (a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

22 (2) (i) “Medical facility” means:

2 **REPRINT OF SENATE BILL 177 as amended by SB0177/103827/1 01/20/26 at 8:41 AM**

1 1. a facility as defined in § 10–101 of the Health – General
 2 Article; or

3 2. a health care facility as defined in § 19–114 of the Health
 4 – General Article.

5 (ii) “Medical facility” includes an agency, clinic, or office operated
 6 under the direction of the local health officer or under the regulatory authority of the
 7 Maryland Department of Health.

8 (b) (1) This section does not apply to:

9 (i) the chief executive officer of the medical facility;

10 (ii) a designee of the chief executive officer of the medical facility;

11 (iii) an agent of the medical facility; or

12 (iv) a law enforcement officer.

13 (2) This section does not prohibit:

14 (i) speech; or

15 (ii) picketing in connection with a labor dispute as defined in §
 16 4–301 of the Labor and Employment Article.

17 (c) A person may not intentionally act, alone or with others, to prevent another
 18 from entering or exiting a medical facility by physically:

19 (1) detaining the other; or

20 (2) obstructing, impeding, or hindering the other’s passage.

21 (d) A person who violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction
 22 is subject to imprisonment not exceeding 90 days or a fine not exceeding \$1,000 or both.

23 **10–204.1.**

24 **(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION, “RELIGIOUS FACILITY” MEANS REAL PROPERTY**
 25 **THAT IS OWNED, LEASED, OR USED BY A RELIGIOUS ENTITY OR FOR ANY RELIGIOUS**
 26 **PURPOSE.**

27 **(2) “RELIGIOUS FACILITY” INCLUDES:**

28 **(I) A PLACE OF WORSHIP;**

3 REPRINT OF SENATE BILL 177 as amended by SB0177/103827/1 01/20/26 at 8:41 AM

1 (II) A CEMETERY;

2 (III) A RELIGIOUS SCHOOL, EDUCATIONAL FACILITY, OR
3 COMMUNITY CENTER; AND

4 (IV) THE GROUNDS ADJACENT TO THEM.

5 (B) (1) THIS SECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO:

6 (I) THE ~~CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER~~ PERSON IN CHARGE OF THE RELIGIOUS
7 FACILITY;

8 (II) A DESIGNEE OF THE ~~CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER~~ PERSON IN CHARGE OF THE
9 RELIGIOUS FACILITY;

10 (III) AN AGENT OF THE RELIGIOUS FACILITY; ~~OR~~

11 (IV) A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER; OR

(V) A PERSON:

1. AUTHORIZED BY THE RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY TO PROTECT THE
RELIGIOUS FACILITY OR THE RELIGIOUS FACILITY'S ACTIVITIES; OR

2. OTHERWISE ACTING IN GOOD FAITH ON THE RELIGIOUS FACILITY'S BEHALF
TO PROTECT THE RELIGIOUS FACILITY OR THE RELIGIOUS FACILITY'S ACTIVITIES.

12 (2) THIS SECTION DOES NOT PROHIBIT SPEECH.

13 (C) A RELIGIOUS FACILITY HAS SOLE DISCRETION IN DETERMINING WHO MAY BE ON THE
RELIGIOUS FACILITY'S PREMISES, AS DETERMINED BY THE INTERNAL DICTATES OF THE RELIGIOUS
ORGANIZATION.

14 ~~(D)~~ (E) A PERSON MAY NOT INTENTIONALLY ACT, ALONE OR WITH OTHERS, TO
15 PREVENT ANOTHER FROM ENTERING OR EXITING A RELIGIOUS FACILITY BY
16 PHYSICALLY:

16 (1) DETAINING THE OTHER; OR

17 (2) OBSTRUCTING, IMPEDING, OR HINDERING THE OTHER'S PASSAGE.

18 ~~(D)~~ (E) A PERSON WHO VIOLATES THIS SECTION IS GUILTY OF A MISDEMEANOR
19 AND ON CONVICTION IS SUBJECT TO IMPRISONMENT NOT EXCEEDING 90 DAYS OR A
20 FINE NOT EXCEEDING \$1,000 OR BOTH.

21 10-302.

22 A person may not deface, damage, or destroy, or attempt or threaten to deface,
23 damage, or destroy, personal or real property that is owned, leased, or used by a religious
24 entity or for any religious purpose including:

25 (1) a place of worship;

26 (2) a cemetery;

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1 (3) a religious school, educational facility, or community center; and

2 (4) the grounds adjacent to them.

3 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
4 October 1, 2026.