



MARYLAND  
CATHOLIC  
CONFERENCE

Jan 28<sup>TH</sup> 2026

HB223

**Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention - Resources, Tools, and Educational Materials**  
**Judicial Proceedings Committee**  
**Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of **House Bill 223**. The Maryland 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.

**House Bill 223** The Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention - Resources, Tools, and Educational Materials expands the powers of the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and intervention by ensuring the development of comprehensive resources, tools, and educational materials related to firearms. This initiative enhances public safety by providing communities with critical information on firearm safety, violence prevention, and responsible gun ownership. Additionally, the bill authorizes the Center to collaborate with State and local agencies, as well as third-party organizations, ensuring a well-rounded and evidence-based approach to firearm violence prevention.

**House Bill 223** aligns with the principles of human dignity, the common good, and the moral obligation to protect human life. By expanding the authority of the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention to develop educational materials, resources, and practical tools, this legislation emphasizes prevention as a vital response to gun violence. The Church consistently calls for policies that promote peace, safeguard innocent lives, and foster a culture of nonviolence—particularly in communities that bear a disproportionate share of gun-related harm.

At the community level, access to firearm safety education and prevention resources empowers families, schools, faith communities, and local organizations to take proactive steps to reduce violence. Educational materials can help prevent accidental shootings, promote responsible firearm storage and ownership, and support early intervention for individuals at risk of harming themselves or others. Authorizing the Center to consult with state and local agencies and trusted community partners ensures that these resources are culturally responsive, evidence-based, and tailored to the specific needs of communities most affected by firearm violence.

From a policy perspective, strengthening the Center's role reflects a shared moral and civic responsibility to protect life and promote justice. Investing in education and prevention addresses the root causes of firearm violence before harm occurs, rather than responding only after tragedy

strikes. By expanding access to reliable tools and fostering collaboration across sectors, **House Bill 223** advances public safety, supports community-led solutions, and affirms Maryland's commitment to protecting the dignity and well-being of every person.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference urges a favorable report on **House Bill 223**.