



MARYLAND  
CATHOLIC  
CONFERENCE

Feb 3<sup>rd</sup> 2026

**HB184**

**Criminal Law - Identity Fraud - Artificial Intelligence and Deepfake Representation  
Judiciary Committee  
Position: INFO only**

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers information only on **House Bill 184**. 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.

This bill makes it unlawful for an individual to use another person's identifying information or engage in specified conduct that results in physical harm, significant emotional distress, or financial damage. It also prohibits the use of artificial intelligence and deep-fake representations for harmful or fraudulent purposes. The bill establishes penalties of up to five years of imprisonment and a fine of up to \$10,000, or both, when one victim is involved. When two or more victims are affected, penalties increase to up to ten years of imprisonment and a fine of up to \$15,000, or both.

The misuse of artificial intelligence and deep-fake technology undermines the dignity of the human person by distorting identity, spreading falsehoods, and causing tangible harm to individuals and families. Protecting individuals from deception, exploitation, and psychological or economic harm is essential to fostering a society rooted in truth and respect.

In their pastoral letter on artificial intelligence, the Maryland Bishops state, "AI must never be used to deepen digital colonialism, surveil vulnerable populations, or create weapons of oppression." As artificial intelligence becomes more prevalent, ethical responsibility requires that its use be guided by accountability, transparency, and care for those most at risk of harm. This bill reflects an effort to balance innovation with moral responsibility by setting clear boundaries around harmful conduct.

For these reasons, it is essential to regulate artificial intelligence in a way that carefully balances innovation, development, and public safety. The purpose of this information is not to discourage technological advancement, but to highlight the serious ethical implications of artificial intelligence and to ensure that its potential impacts on individuals, families, and communities are fully considered as the technology continues to evolve.

In the same pastoral letter, the Maryland Bishops further reflect, “Today, artificial intelligence is a test of our humanity, our ethics, and our faith. Will we allow technology to form us in its image—or will we shape it according to the Gospel?”

With these concerns in mind, the Maryland Catholic Conference urges a holistic and responsible approach to the growth of artificial intelligence—one that supports innovation while prioritizing the protection, dignity, and safety of all Marylanders above all else.

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