



March 4, 2026

HB 1034

Child Care Entities - Child Abuse and Neglect - Training and Reporting Requirements

House Ways & Means Committee

Position: FAVORABLE w/ Amendment

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of House Bill 1034, with amendment. 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. However, rather than require teachers and staff to complete the training proscribed by Family Law Article 5-716, which is procured by the state department of education, we propose an amendment to allow for a substitute course that is at least as comprehensive and covering the same topics is well warranted.

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.

For the aforementioned reasons, we ask for the inclusion of the attached amendment on House Bill 1034.

Amendment to House Bill 1034

Amendment No. 1

Page 2, line 16, after “ARTICLE”, insert “OR A COMPREHENSIVE COURSE THAT IS SUBSTANTIALLY EQUIVALENT”.