



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

March 1, 2021

**HB 638
Public Safety - Untraceable and Undetectable Firearms**

House Judiciary Committee

Position: Support

The Maryland Catholic Conference (“Conference”) represents the public policy interests of the three Roman Catholic (arch)dioceses serving Maryland: the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Diocese of Wilmington.

House Bill 638 alters a certain definition of regulated firearm to include a certain unfinished frame or receiver; authorizing a person to continue to possess a certain firearm or unfinished frame or receiver on or after January 1, 2022, if the firearm or unfinished frame or receiver is marked with a unique serial number and the person maintains a certain record log; prohibiting a person from possessing a certain firearm or unfinished frame or receiver on or after January 1, 2022.

The Catholic Church has a strong interest in public safety and keeping communities safe. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops states in response to rising violence that “[w]e have an obligation to respond. Violence – in our homes, our schools and streets, our nation and world – is destroying the lives, dignity and hopes of millions of our sisters and brothers.” To that point, the Church supports legislation that controls the sale and use of and strengthens regulations on dangerous firearms, and other such legislation that makes guns safer.

In practice, the Conference supports legislation that restricts access to lethal weapons that endanger entire communities. When community members are not in fear of their lives, they can live up to their God-given potential and enrich the world around them. Every person has a right to life, and the Conference will continue to work to combat violence and promote a culture of peace. Banning dangerous and lethal weapons such as untraceable or undetectable firearms is a manageable and efficient way to curb the rising culture of violence. Recent events in the United States have made gun safety legislation a primary goal, and the Conference earnestly supports the banning of these devices that contribute to that effort.

The Conference appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 638.