

THE CATHOLIC VOICE

speaking for the vulnerable in Maryland's public square

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Annapolis, MD

Physician-Assisted Suicide Bill Withdrawn in the Senate

This morning in the Senate, the Physician-Assisted Suicide bill (SB 354) was withdrawn from consideration by lead sponsor Senator Guy Guzzone, and the bill's March 7 hearing in the Senate Judicial Proceedings committee was canceled. It is likely that the bill was withdrawn because the majority of the committee continues to oppose the bill.

This action effectively ends the chance of this issue passing in Maryland for the third straight year, although the Maryland Catholic Conference will be monitoring the House bill (HB 370) until the last day of session to make sure it does not pass.

"It is a relief that this very dangerous bill is not moving forward again this year," said Maryland Catholic Conference Respect For Life lobbyist Jennifer Briemann. "We are very grateful to all of our coalition partners for working tirelessly on behalf of the intellectually and developmentally disabled, the elderly, the sick, and the vulnerable to make sure this legislation was seen for what it is, a fatally flawed bill. This victory would not have been possible without the support of the Knights of Columbus and parishes from around the state, whose grassroots advocacy efforts proved yet again that Marylanders strongly believe our state is not a state where this practice belongs."

Funded by out-of-state, multi-million dollar entity Compassion & Choices, the legislation sought to allow doctors to prescribe lethal drugs to terminally-ill patients who want to end their lives. The Conference is part of the [Maryland Against Physician Assisted Suicide coalition](#), a diverse group of healthcare professionals, disability rights advocates, mental health professionals, advocates for Seniors, and members of faith communities in opposition to the legislation.

Please keep communicating with legislators since we believe supporters of the bill will try again in 2018.

Record crowd at Nonpublic Schools Advocacy Day

More than 1,300 nonpublic schools students from 12 Maryland counties and Baltimore City converged on Annapolis Thursday to advocate for the Broadening Options and Opportunities for Students Today (BOOST) program. The Maryland Catholic Conference is a member of the Council for American Private Education, which hosted the event.

Last year, the General Assembly expanded educational options for low-income students through an innovative scholarship program called Broadening Options and Opportunities for Students Today (BOOST). The program helps eligible students, who qualify for free and reduced price lunch, to attend the school best fit for their educational needs by providing scholarship assistance toward attending a nonpublic school.

The primary focus of the day was for students to thank legislators for the BOOST scholarship program and ask to continue funding. Various officials and legislators addressed the group in the Miller Senate Office building and during a rally on Lawyers Mall.

St. Francis International in Silver Spring brought more than 100 students to Nonpublic School Advocacy Day. The school choir sang "Maryland, My Maryland" at a rally on Lawyers Mall before Gov. Larry Hogan spoke to the crowd.

Visit the Maryland Catholic Conference's Facebook page for a photo album of the event. [Click HERE to see photos from the event.](#)

Nine media outlets covered the event, including WBAL-TV education reporter Tim Tooten. [View Tooten's report HERE.](#)



More than 1,300 students filled Lawyers Mall and the House and Senate Office Buildings on March 2 for Nonpublic Schools Advocacy Day. Governor Hogan (center front above in Ray Bans) took time to mingle with the students before addressing them about his support of BOOST and his desire to see the successful program grow.

Maryland House passes Earned Sick Leave bill

For the second consecutive year, the House of Delegates passed the Maryland Healthy Working Families Act (HB 1) that would require businesses with 15 or more workers to provide 1 hour of earned paid sick leave for every 30 hours worked, and require businesses with fewer than 15 employees to provide 1 hour of job-protected unpaid leave for every 30 hours worked. **The bill was debated on the House floor this morning for less than an hour before the delegates voted 88-51 in favor.** The House bill (HB 1) will now cross over to the Senate for consideration.

The Senate Finance committee heard a cross-filed version of the bill on SB 230 on Feb. 9.

Catholics in Annapolis video unveiled

Earlier today, the Archdiocese of Washington unveiled a two-minute video on last month's Catholics in Annapolis event in Annapolis. [Click HERE to watch the video.](#)

Since the mid-1980's, the event has brought thousands of Catholics from across Maryland to the State Capital to learn about policy issues, meet with legislators and make their voices heard. The Archdiocese of Washington includes five Maryland counties: Calvert, Charles, Montgomery, Prince George's and St. Mary's.

Because We Are Catholic

During the General Assembly's Legislative Session, the Conference produces a short feature on the good things happening in the Church in the state of Maryland. This week's story profiles WJZ-TV sports director Mark Viviano, who says faith is the most lasting and meaningful gift his parents gave him: <http://bit.ly/2mJ02wJ>.