



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE + ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON + DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

**STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 1236
HIGHER EDUCATION – TUITION CHARGES –
MARYLAND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

**Presented on Tuesday, March 4, 2008 to the
House Ways and Means Committee**

*By Julie Varner
Associate Director, Social Concerns*

The Maryland Catholic Conference represents the public-policy interests of the three Roman Catholic (arch)dioceses serving the state of Maryland – the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Diocese of Wilmington. The Conference testifies today in support of House Bill 1236.

HB 1236 would require Maryland public universities and community colleges to base in-state tuition status on the attendance of and graduation from Maryland schools and the withholding of Maryland income taxes. In so doing, the bill would make college education possible for a new generation of immigrant Marylanders.

Most children standing to benefit from this legislation came to the United States with their parents. Their parents chose to bring them to the United States and raise them in Maryland, and any questions regarding the legality of their decision should be directed at the parents, not the children. These children have called Maryland home and have been educated here. Maryland is their reality – their past, present, and they hope, their future. Just like any other young person in Maryland, these students have hopes and dreams, and are eager to build an adult life for themselves. They deserve the same opportunity to succeed, using their own talents and hard work, as their fellow Maryland classmates.

In our increasingly complex economic environment, the better-educated individuals are, the better chance they have of supporting themselves and their families. By making a college education affordable, you provide young people with one of America's most prized gifts – opportunity. And when education, opportunity, and job skills are available to and sought after by Maryland's youth, all Marylanders benefit.

We urge your support for HB 1236 as an important means of providing opportunity to young immigrants who are living in our communities and who hope to contribute to our society. Thank you for your consideration.