



**Senate Bill 112  
Interested Party Testimony  
Senate Education Committee  
Catholic Conference of Ohio  
May 21, 2024**

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide interested party testimony today on Senate Bill 112.

I am Tom Rhatican, an associate director with the Catholic Conference of Ohio. The Catholic Conference is the official voice of the Catholic Church in Ohio on matters of public policy, and we are pleased to provide you with important information on the impact of SB 112 on Catholic schools as amended.

We have 370 chartered Catholic schools in Ohio, with over 110,000 students—or approximately two-thirds of all chartered, non-public school students in the state. Our schools are deeply committed to providing our students, their families, and all our teachers and administrators with a safe environment to learn and thrive.

The bill applies to public schools and their respective superintendents' offices and school boards, as well as to all chartered non-public schools because it applies to "the governing authority of [each] chartered non-public school" (lines 34-38).

The vast majority of our approximately 300 K-8 schools – and school buildings -- are operated by the local parish. In other words, our schools do not have a centralized facilities staff. Roof, window, and door replacements are all managed by the school principal in coordination with the parish priest, the maintenance staff, and sometimes the diocesan office. Catholic high schools individually plan, manage, and budget for all facility upgrades and inspections.

The LSC's Fiscal Note on SB 112 cites relevant data provided by the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission that causes us some concern. First, the OFCC estimates the cost of each door replacement to be approximately \$400-\$1000. If each building has 15-25 exterior doors, the estimated cost for each school could be approximately \$20,000 to \$25,000.

Lastly, the bill will require each school (or parish) to arrange for an inspector qualified to test and inspect each exterior door. While the recent amendment (AM 1777) now requires that each door assembly only be inspected in accordance with the Code in effect at the time of installation, the burden still falls on each school to secure a qualified inspector and annual inspection. Do all fire departments, urban and rural, have trained and certified door assembly inspectors? Will the fire departments provide protective door inspections if requested?

Catholic schools continuously assess improvements to building safety and vigorously enforce building security and safety standards for our students, families, and staff. Thus, the increased cost and administrative oversight generated by the bill – together with the possible imposition of fines for non-compliance, may simply not be necessary at this time.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

