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LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

To: Joint Committee on Education

From: James F. Driscoll, Esq., Executive Director

Re: House Bill 427, "An Act relative to parental notification for out of school district counseling referrals."

Date: October 8, 2013

The Massachusetts Catholic Conference ("MCC") respectfully submits this testimony in support of House Bill 427, "An Act relative to parental notification for out-of-school-district counseling referrals."

If enacted, this legislation would put into place important protections for parents who have a vested interest in their children's interactions while at school, by requiring a school district to notify a child's parents or legal guardians of any out-of-school-district referrals. The obvious implications of concern to the Church are referrals to agencies or clinics that provide abortion services or other family-planning services of which any parent would want to be aware.

Parents play crucial and irreplaceable roles in their children's moral development, and particularly in the delicate area of human sexuality. This parental notification requirement would strengthen and reaffirm the role of parents as the primary teachers of their children

The Massachusetts Catholic Conference is the public policy office of the Roman Catholic Bishops in the Commonwealth, representing the Archdiocese of Boston and the Dioceses of Fall River, Springfield, and Worcester.