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CONTACT: Jeff Caruso, Executive Director
804-225-8565

Virginia Bishops Applaud Governor's Signature of "Share the Ride" Legislation

Governor Kaine has signed landmark legislation with the potential to benefit many nonpublic-school families. The bill, commonly known as "share the ride" and favored by over two-thirds of the General Assembly members who cast a vote on it, will give school boards a local option to provide busing for nonpublic-school students. Advocacy in favor of the enacted measure was spearheaded by the Virginia Catholic Conference, the public-policy arm of the Commonwealth's Catholic bishops and their two dioceses. Together, the Catholic Dioceses of Richmond and Arlington operate 75 schools.

Virginia Catholic Conference Director Jeff Caruso expressed gratitude to the Governor and many General Assembly members for their endorsement of "watershed legislation that I hope will usher in a new era of collaboration between public and nonpublic schools." Caruso called the new law "an attractive tool for localities that want to reduce traffic congestion and provide more children a particularly safe form of transportation in a way that would benefit everyone involved."

Twenty-seven other states permit localities to provide school transportation to nonpublic-school students.