

# Archdiocesan leader pleased with child protection measures in ‘ban the box’ bill

**By Maria Wiering**

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The Archdiocese of Baltimore’s head of child protection praised Baltimore’s “Ban the Box” bill for including provisions to protect children and vulnerable adults. The City Council passed the controversial bill April 28.

“We are very pleased with how the City Council has amended the bill,” said Alison D’Alessandro, director of the archdiocese’s Office of Child and Youth Protection.

“It’s important everyone works together to be advocates for our children,” she said.

The bill prohibits employers from checking applicants’ criminal history prior to extending a conditional job offer, in an effort to curb discrimination against ex-convicts in hiring practices.

The Archdiocese of Baltimore supported the aims of the bill as a matter of social justice, but pushed for some exemptions for employers hiring staff who would have contact with children or vulnerable adults. D’Alessandro testified before the council in February. The bill was amended to reflect the archdiocese’s concern.

As the Catholic Review previously reported, D’Alessandro said a prior version of the bill would have not allowed the archdiocese, parishes or schools from asking applicants whether they had been accused of child abuse.

“We applaud the desire of the City Council to create opportunities for everyone,” she said. “Our highest priority in the archdiocese is to create the safest environment for our children.”

Councilmember Nick Mosby, who represents District 7, sponsored the bill.

Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake is expected to sign the legislation, according to multiple reports.

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