

DREAM Act heading to referendum

Despite efforts by faith leaders to encourage Marylanders not to sign a referendum petition on the Maryland DREAM Act, enough signatures have been certified to do just that. The Maryland State Board of Elections had certified 87,073 petition signatures as of July 11 - well more than the 55,736 signatures required to bring the law to a vote in 2012.

The DREAM Act allows certain undocumented immigrants to receive in-state college tuition if they meet certain requirements.

Mary Ellen Russell, executive director of the Annapolis-based Maryland Catholic Conference, said a newly established inter-diocesan taskforce has begun its work educating Catholics on the issue and will hold its first meeting in early August. Forums will be held in parishes throughout the state in the coming year to foster a conversation on the issue, she said.

"We welcome the opportunity for dialogue," Russell said. "We are really committed to helping to keep the tenor of the dialogue respectful and productive."

Russell encouraged those interested in supporting the educational effort to visit www.mdcathcon.org to contact MCC leaders.