

New Jersey State Council

Religious and Civil Rights (R & C)

Talking Points for Councils

March 2026

Worthy Grand Knights, Worthy Religious & Civil Rights Committee Chairmen, and Brothers all:

We are suggesting that this month's focus for discussion and prayer is an issue that is critically important to our Catholic and all other nonpublic schools. That issue is security. We are all aware of the increasing acts of public violence. Many of these acts have occurred in houses of worship and schools. Both public and nonpublic schools, and particularly religious schools, have experienced increasing threats in recent years. Several examples include:

- In this past February, eight people (including six children) were killed and many others wounded at a high school in Tumbler Ridge, Canada.
- In August of 2025, two children were killed and eighteen people were wounded during an Annunciation Catholic School Mass in the adjacent church in Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- In December of 2024, two people were killed and six wounded at Abundant Life Christian School in Madison, Wisconsin.

The New Jersey Catholic Conference (NJCC) has issued an Action Alert to request increased state funding for nonpublic school security. As background, the following are some of talking points:

- A line item for the nonpublic school security was placed in the State Budget in Fiscal Year 2017. The amount was \$11,300,000 or \$75.00 per pupil.
- Since 2017, there have been more security breaches in both public and nonpublic schools in the state.
- During the 12 months following the October 7, 2023 attack on Israel by Hamas, it is estimated that over 800 antisemitic incidents have occurred in New Jersey.
- Other nonpublic school religious denominations in New Jersey and across the country have demonstrated the need for an enhanced and detailed security presence.
- The initial state funding was primarily used for "target-hardening." Many nonpublic school buildings were built without the anticipation of security risks, particularly in religious schools.
- While "target hardening" in nonpublic school buildings continues, nonpublic schools find it necessary to hire armed security for the protection of students and staff during school hours. Security companies are charging costly rates for these services.
- The current funding for Fiscal Year 2026 for nonpublic school security is \$30,550,000 or \$205.00 per pupil per year. That funding has remained flat for the last four state budget cycles.
- The NJCC is seeking an increase in the Governor's Fiscal Year 2027 Budget to \$260.00 per pupil to cover the increasing costs for the protection and well-being of all nonpublic school children.

We ask you to please consider using the following link to contact Governor Mikie Sherrill and ask her to increase state funding for nonpublic school security to \$260.00 per pupil, which is an increase of \$55.00 per pupil: <https://www.votervoice.net/NJCC/Campaigns/133970/Respond>

Fraternally,

Dan Rossi

Dan Rossi, PSD
R&C Committee Chairman