

**Testimony to Cincinnati City Council on MARCC ID**  
**May 11, 2016**  
**Tony Stieritz, Catholic Social Action Office Director**

Good afternoon. I'm Tony Stieritz, Director of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Catholic Social Action Office. On behalf of the Archdiocese, I want to thank Mayor Cranley, the City Solicitor's office, Cincinnati Police Department, supportive Councilmembers, and the numerous religious and community groups that are now making the MARCC ID card a reality.

A fundamental aspect to our God-given human dignity, that we often take for granted, is our own identity and our ability to be recognized by others for who we really are. For important reasons, we expect substantiated forms of ID in order to prove who we are to government officials, businesses and other service providers. Yet it's clear to us that, for some vulnerable populations in our city – immigrants, the homeless, those just released from prison – proper ID is often too difficult to obtain. Their inability to prove themselves before local authorities exacerbates the problems in their already tumultuous lives, especially when they are victims of crime.

We have experienced incidences when newly arrived immigrants were victims of accidents and crimes, yet they had to be carted away to have their identity substantiated before their issues could even be addressed. At one time, when an immigrant was victimized in front of one of our churches, the word of the pastor who tried to vouch for him wasn't even good enough. We know that many returning citizens and the homeless experience similar difficulties.

The MARCC ID card, modeled on other successfully ID programs in other cities, will fill in these notable gaps. It will be easier to obtain than a state ID, yet it will still require a level of proof of identity to inspire trust among the police and city officials. The fact that the police department and numerous immigrant, reentry and homeless groups are all on board with this is the most telling indicator of its necessity and chances for success. We believe that this ID will build stronger bridges of trust among these populations and ensure that Cincinnati is welcoming towards all.

Thank you.