

BREAKING: SB 360, the bill, which would deny the Seal of Confession to priests and employees of the Catholic Church, has been pulled from committee and is effectively removed from consideration this year.

### **Statement from Bishop Oscar Cantú and the Diocese of San José**

The Diocese of San Jose has learned that State Senator Jerry Hill has withdrawn his bill, SB 360, regarding the Seal of Confession, from the California Assembly Public Safety Committee, just a day before its scheduled hearings.

I want to thank the many parishioners who made their voices heard to their Assembly representatives in opposition to SB 360, as it violates the free practice of our faith. Our priests and I are grateful that we do not have to be subject to prosecution by law for being faithful to the privacy of Confession. The Seal of Confession is sacred and should not be broken.

There is strong evidence that training priests, teachers, staff, parents, and children to recognize suspicious behavior, report any and all instances of abuse and neglect, and prioritize the safety of children is resulting in the dramatic increase of safe spaces for children and families.

The Church in San José continues to be vigilant in creating an environment which is safe and nurturing for all. The reporting requirements and protections for clergy members are already identical to the requirements and protections for other mandated reporters, except for the provision exempting information acquired during a Confession.

The Diocese of San Jose conducts background checks and requires recertification training every three years for diocesan bishops, priests, deacons, employees, and volunteers. Since 2002, approximately 52,500 adults in the Diocese have been trained to recognize and report child abuse. Working together to be vigilant and keep children safe, our Catholic community is committed to creating a safe environment for all children and families.