



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB0806

**Maryland Health Benefit Exchange and Maryland Department of Health -
Health Care Coverage for Undocumented Immigrants - Report
FAVORABLE**

TO: Senator Melony Griffith, Chair. Senator Katherine Klausmeier and members of the Senate Finance Committee

FROM: Rev. Kenneth Phelps, Jr., Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network, Episcopal Diocese of Maryland

DATE: February 15, 2023

The Episcopal Church supports comprehensive health care and recognizes the need for universal and equitable access for all. General Convention urges Episcopalians to advocate for adequate health care, along with nutrition and housing, as human rights that should be provided to all those residing in our nation, including immigrants, undocumented or otherwise. This advocacy on a number of healthcare policy asks is viewed as a Church ministry and as a way to promote healthy American communities.

So it is that we are pleased to offer a favorable testimony in strong support of the Maryland SB 806-Health Benefit Exchange and Maryland Department of Health - Health Care Coverage for Undocumented Immigrants - Report. This legislation represents an important milestone in our journey towards creating a resilient healthcare system for all, especially communities of color who have been disproportionately impacted by lack of care.

In 2022 this committee took a bold step in ensuring that pregnant women have access to care for their unborn babies. The Healthy Babies Equity Act expands Medicaid to pregnant individuals who meet the normal requirements of the program regardless of immigration status. We know this will have an immediate positive impact on our communities. SB 806 seeks to gather information to help us better serve our uninsured residents by comparing options for offering affordable healthcare coverage to State residents who are ineligible for the Maryland Medical Assistance Program, the Maryland Children's Health Program, or qualified health



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plans through the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange due to the individual's immigration status.

This common-sense legislation is uncontentious and aligns Maryland with its values of protecting life and treating all people with dignity, respect, and care, which happens to be the promise that all Episcopalians make at their baptism.

The Diocese of Maryland requests a Favorable report