



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB0107**

**Maryland Health Benefit Exchange – Small Employers – Special Enrollment  
Period and Marketing**

**FAVORABLE**

**TO:** Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair. Delegate Arian B. Kelly, Vice-Chair  
and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee.

**FROM:** Rev. Kenneth Phelps, Jr., Co-Director, Maryland Episcopal Public Policy  
Network

**DATE:** February 16, 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 veterans. This advocacy on a number of healthcare policy asks is viewed as a Church ministry and as a way to promote healthy American communities.

This bill would invest \$5 million/year into a five-year outreach program to help small employers and their employees get connected with health coverage. This outreach would include education and training regarding existing coverage options, including enrolling in coverage through Maryland Health Connection, the state's online insurance marketplace, as well as options for employer-sponsored plans both on- and off- exchange. Such a marketing and outreach program would both help to reduce the overall uninsured rate in the state and support Maryland's small employers by ensuring that their employees have the coverage they need to remain healthy and productive. In addition to helping employees stay healthy, health coverage also helps make employment opportunities more attractive to job seekers which is important in the current economic climate. Small businesses are more likely than large businesses to be owned by people of color and Maryland has the highest rate per-capita of businesses owned by people of color in the nation. Providing better opportunities for small businesses and nonprofits to help their employees connect with health coverage will improve health equity.

**The Diocese of Maryland requests a Favorable report**