



**Delaware-Maryland Synod**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

Testimony Prepared for the  
**Judiciary Committee**

on

**House Bill 1**

March 2, 2023

Position: **Favorable**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify about keeping children and others safe from predation and criminal behaviors. I am Lee Hudson, assistant to the bishop for public policy in the Delaware-Maryland Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We are a faith community with congregations in three synods in every part of the State.

We are supporting **House Bill 1** because we made an institutional commitment in 2009: *This church will work with all people to craft fair and comprehensive laws particularly aimed at protecting the weakest and most vulnerable among us, especially children, from sexual harm.*

We believe that institutions functioning in public have a responsibility to keep their own constituencies, and those with whom they engage, safe. Abuse, especially sexual predation, can be liabilities for organizations that gather and work with vulnerable people, particularly the young, who are entitled to safe spaces and practices.

Institutions of public-facing enterprise should be incentivized for due diligence in keeping people safe by policy, training, and practice. We know that sufferings and difficulties brought on by abuse and exploitation endures. Accountability should, also. Clinical consultation experience corroborates that recognition of the origin of sufferings in abuse may not emerge for some length of time, and only after many symptomatic episodes.

We, therefore, support extending the statute of limitations for civil actions arising from abuse in institutional settings, as **House Bill 1**. It would challenge organizations to make safety a priority of purpose. It may also extend something more than sympathies to victims. We ask your favorable report.

Lee Hudson