



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

HB 469 – Employment Discrimination – Exceptions – Religious Activities of Religious Employers

DATE: February 14, 2024
COMMITTEE: House Economic Matters Committee
POSITION: Favorable
FROM: The Office of Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater

As the County Executive of Frederick County, I urge the committee to give HB 469 – Employment Discrimination – Exceptions – Religious Activities of Religious Employers a favorable report.

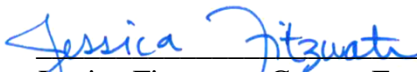
This bill will specify that the exemption for religious employers to certain prohibitions against employment discrimination applies only to the religious activities of the employers.

Currently, religious organizations are permitted to discriminate against those with different beliefs or identities in the name of religion. This means that employers may refuse to hire someone simply due to their sexual orientation, religion, or gender identity. Based on a 2022 Center for American Progress survey, half of LGBTQI+ adults reported experiencing some form of workplace discrimination or harassment in the past year because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. It is imperative that the State of Maryland do everything possible to limit these instances.

This bill will not take the right to freedom of religion away from these organizations, as it does not change existing law that applies to religious activity at work. However, for any non-religion-specific roles, discrimination will be prohibited.

HB 469 is vital to preventing discrimination against job seekers from religious employers. For the well-being of our constituents and the good of the state economy, it is important that we continue to remove barriers to employment for all who wish to work in our state.

Thank you for your consideration of HB 469. I urge you to advance this bill with a favorable report.



Jessica Fitzwater, County Executive
Frederick County, MD