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Patrick Moran – President

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**HB 602 – Employment Discrimination – Sexual Orientation**  
**Economic Matters Committee**  
**February 21, 2024**

**FAVORABLE**

AFSCME supports HB 602. This bill expands the State’s Equal Pay for Equal Work law by prohibiting employment discrimination based on sexual orientation. The bill incorporates the prohibition of discrimination based on sexual orientation into existing prohibitions against workplace discrimination under the Equal Pay for Equal Work law. Thus, an employer may not discriminate between employees in any occupation by providing less favorable employment opportunities based on sexual orientation or by paying a wage to employees of one sexual orientation at a rate less than the rate paid to employees of another sexual orientation, as specified under current law. We believe all individuals must be treated fairly and equally in the workplace, regardless of their sexual orientation.

Discrimination based on sexual orientation is an issue that can have detrimental effects on individuals' careers and livelihoods. By expanding the state's equal pay law to include protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation, we can ensure that all Marylanders are given a fair chance to succeed in the workplace. By recognizing and addressing discrimination based on sexual orientation reflects societal progress toward greater acceptance, diversity, and inclusion and it sends a message that discrimination in any form is unacceptable and reinforces the values of tolerance and respect for all individuals.

Furthermore, including protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation in the equal pay law would send a clear message that Maryland is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion in the workplace. This will not only benefit employees, but also employers who will have access to a more diverse and talented workforce.

I urge you to support this important measure to protect the rights of all individuals in Maryland and we ask for a favorable report on HB 602.

