

FAVORABLE
House Bill 602
Employment Discrimination – Sexual Orientation

House Economic Matters
February 21, 2024

Christian Gobel
Government Relations

The Maryland State Education Association supports House Bill 602. House Bill 602 amends the Equal Pay for Equal Work law to explicitly prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Under the bill, an employer would be prohibited from discriminating between employees in any job by providing less favorable employment opportunities based on sexual orientation or by providing compensation to employees of one sexual orientation at a rate less than the rate paid to employees of another sexual orientation, subject to certain conditions and exceptions.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

MSEA believes that every individual must be protected from all forms of discrimination and stereotyping including discrimination or stereotyping based on sexual orientation. No worker should be subjected to employment discrimination from their employer. House Bill 602 will advance equality for Marylanders and takes an important step to address the Maryland Supreme Court's disappointing ruling in *John Doe v. Catholic Relief Services*, 484 Md. 640 (2023). MSEA applauds the Speaker and Chair Clippinger for bringing forward this critical piece of legislation.

We strongly urge the committee to issue a Favorable Report on House Bill 602.