

Dear Sir or Madam,

My name is Terry Izer, the Superintendent of facilities and men's program at The Hope center at Hagerstown Rescue Mission. I am writing in opposition of SB1107. The Hope Center is a multi- faceted faith-based organization providing various resources to those in need, including overnight shelter services to men 365 nights a year. Our first and foremost responsibility at The Hope Center is to provide spiritual guidance and wellbeing based on our faith and interpretation of scriptures.

Again, The Hope Center provides all services based on our religious values. SB 1107 goes directly against our religious autonomy by allowing State governance and standards on operational policy and procedures to include number and duties of paid staff, procedures for vetting volunteers, as well as admission policies to name a few. Passage of any part of this bill outside of habitability requirements for health/life safety would go against our freedom and autonomy protected under the 1st Amendment. This bill is an attempt to use governmental authority and fear of penalty, to force faith-based organizations to comply with an agenda that differs from the sponsors of this bill.

The homeless community as well as the communities they reside in will be negatively impacted with passage of HB1107 as it will force faith-based shelters to close their doors, putting those we serve on the streets each night. Faith based constituents across the state who have provided shelter services for generations agree they will close their doors rather than go against our religious beliefs. Passage of this bill will guarantee large numbers of shelter beds being lost across the state.

The Hope Center as well as faith-based shelters across the state cannot and will not allow the state to have governance over our ministry operational process.

Terry K. Izer

Superintendent of Facilities and Men's programs

The Hope Center at the Hagerstown Rescue Mission